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## **Scotland and the Trident system, 1979-1999**

**By**

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**Submitted in requirement for the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy**

**University of Glasgow  
Department of History (Scottish History)  
October 2004**

  
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## **Abstract**

The Trident strategic nuclear missile system was developed by the United States in the 1970s and selected in 1980 by the Thatcher government to become Britain's main nuclear deterrent. It replaced a similar but smaller Polaris missile submarine system, which had entered service in 1968. The Royal Navy version comprised of four massive 'Vanguard' class nuclear submarines; these vessels were commissioned between 1993 and 1999. Each submarine could carry sixteen Trident D5 warheads; each missile could mount up to eight thermonuclear warheads.

The submarines and warheads were produced in England and the missiles were produced and serviced in the United States. Nevertheless, the Trident decision meant that Scotland remained the main base of Britain's strategic nuclear forces. Complex and expensive new support facilities were constructed at the existing British Polaris base at Faslane on the Gareloch in the Clyde Estuary; nuclear storage facilities were constructed nearby at Coulport. Further activities were to be carried out at the existing naval dockyard at Rosyth in the east of Scotland. These were the three major Trident facilities in Scotland. At the time of writing (2004) Scotland's experience with Trident has not been adequately researched or subjected to the insight of historians.

One of the three core arguments presented in this thesis suggests that many people accepted the view that Trident was a necessary contributor to national security. The promise of sustained employment in Scotland was a second reason to accept Trident. Finally, the Scottish people did not actively oppose Trident because they had become familiar with Polaris.

Chapter One discusses the experiences of Strathclyde communities and those local governments near Faslane and Coulport. Chapter Two is concerned with the experiences of Fife communities and those local governments in proximity to Rosyth Royal Dockyard. The third chapter will discuss the Scottish political dimension of Trident and evaluates the pressures that the disarmament issue implied for the various parties. Chapter Four reveals the various reactions of seven components within Scottish civil society to Trident's procurement. Chapter Five investigates the disarmament movement's experience with Trident in Scotland. Chapter Six presents the conclusions of this study.

Official printed sources employed in this thesis include Defence Committee reports, Notices of Proposed Development and case-studies from the National Audit Office. Other documents included Strathclyde Region Council's 1983 Coulport Inquiry, and literature from the SCND, the Nuclear Free Local Authorities and the Scottish Trades Union Congress. This research also uses council minutes, environmental impact assessments and several hundred clippings from local newspapers. Furthermore, oral and written testimony served to fill numerous historical gaps. Numerous interviews and correspondences involved government officials, British MPs and MSPs, members of the Scottish media and the STUC, Faslane shop stewards, along with members of Scotland's religious community, the disarmament movement and everyday citizens.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile
AESG	Alternative Employment Study Group
AF	Alex Falconer
ADM	Alan D McDonald
BASIC	British American Security Information Council
BL	Balloch Library
BSSRS	British Society for Social Responsibility in Science
CEP	Circular Error Probable
CMO	Catholic Media Office
CPGB	Communist Party of Great Britain
CND	Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
DL	Dumbarton Library
D.S. 19	Defence Secretariat 19
DSTL	Defence Technology Centre Scheme
DAC	Direct Action Committee
DCL	<i>Dunfermline Central Library</i>
DERA	Defence Evaluation and Research Agency
DML	Devonport Management Limited
DP	<i>Dunfermline Press</i>
FC	Fife Council
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GCUA	Glasgow Caledonian University Archives
GH	<i>Glasgow Herald</i>
GLC	Greater London Council
GLCM	Ground-Launched Cruise Missile
GP	Green Peace
GT	<i>Greenock Telegraph</i>
GUL	Glasgow University Library
HA	<i>Helensburgh Advertiser</i>
HL	Helensburgh Library
HSE	Health and Safety Executive
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IRA	Irish Republican Army
JT	Jim Taggart
LH	<i>Lennox Herald</i>
MIRV	Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle
MISC 7	Miscellaneous 7
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NFLA	Nuclear Free Local Authorities
NFZ	Nuclear Free Zone
NII	Nuclear Installations Inspectorate
NNPT	Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty
NoPD	Notice of Proposed Development

## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms (cont.)

NUB	Northern Utilities Building
OPEC	Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries
PSA	Property Sales Agency
RAF	Royal Air Force
RNAD	Royal Naval Armament Depot
RSCO	Rachel Squire Constituency Office
SCAT	Scottish Campaign Against Trident
SCND	Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
SCRAM	Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace
SDP	Social Democratic Party
SEPA	Scottish Environment Protection Agency
SH	<i>Sunday Herald</i>
SLBM	Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile
SNP	Scottish National Party
SoS	<i>Scotland on Sunday</i>
SSBN	Nuclear Powered Ballistic Missile Submarine
SSN	Nuclear-Powered Attack Submarine
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
STUC	Scottish Trade Union Congress
TC	<i>The Coracle</i>
TCHD Mk2	Truck Cargo Heavy-Duty Mark 2
TFT	<i>The Financial Times</i>
TG	<i>The Guardian</i>
TGWU	Transport and General Workers Union
TH	<i>The Herald</i>
TI	<i>The Independent</i>
TS	<i>The Scotsman</i>
TT	<i>The Times</i>
TTG	<i>The Telegraph</i>
TUC	Trades Union Congress
VSEL	Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Ltd.
WMD	Weapon of Mass Destruction

## **Introduction**

Before one can begin a thorough examination of the Scottish historical experience with the Trident system it is first necessary to explain the specific path to be taken within this introduction. We begin with a discussion on the rationale for such a thesis, core arguments are presented, and then it is necessary to provide background information on both the Royal Navy's experience with the submersible and the decision to employ the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) system. Due to the vast degree of complexity associated with this topic, and the quantitative limitations imposed upon this work, the account of the Royal Navy's experience is merely an overview of events. This will be followed by an explanation of the numerous sources utilised in this thesis, and the methodology employed by the researcher, so that one might better understand how an accurate depiction of Scotland's experience with Trident was finally established. Ultimately, the contents of this study systemically reveal the tension that Trident exacted upon civil society and Scotland's place in the Union. It also uncovers the changing nature of the relationship between Scotland and the most recent sea-borne deterrent over the course of two decades.

### **Rationale**

This thesis is important because it interprets the first two decades of Scotland's interaction with the Royal Navy's Trident SSBN and SLBM. This research seeks to highlight the impact a project of this magnitude has had on Scottish communities, the physical environment and the numerous concerns the nuclear dimension of Trident has generated north of the Border. It also underlines the complexities the

system has placed upon Scotland's relationship with the remainder of the UK while providing an example for future decisions regarding a replacement for Trident. In addition, this study also examines the several strategies that central government has employed over the course of twenty years to assist in convincing both the Scottish and British electorate of Trident's utility. Moreover, Trident came with a £5,000 million price tag and this work has revealed the economic repercussions of maintaining such a system, both to Scotland and the wider UK. Lastly, the country's interaction with the SSBN verifies Scotland's strategic importance to the British military establishment throughout the Cold War era but may provoke the reader to question the system's necessity in an age where the Soviet Union is no more.

From 1961 a number of Scotland's residents became increasingly concerned with nuclear weaponry after the arrival of the American Polaris fleet in the Holy Loch. Yet the safe operation of US and UK systems from Strathclyde, along with their employment potential, subdued many of the various concerns associated with the deterrent. However, one might expect to hear the phrase 'ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid' from a Glasgow peace activist, someone who ultimately rejected central government's economic arguments for Trident.<sup>1</sup> Because Strathclyde served as Trident's operational centre, the explicit targeting of Scottish territory by Soviet military strategists during the Cold War era, the fears that accompanied the possibilities for accidental radiological contamination, and, more recently, the vulnerability of this system to acts of terrorism have fuelled this ongoing trepidation. Despite rigorous safety guidelines enforced over the course of its life

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<sup>1</sup> This is a line from the Polaris protest anthem *Ding-Dong Dollar*. See Chapter five: Scotland and the disarmament movement.

expectancy, Trident, and future versions of the nuclear deterrent, will undoubtedly generate some level of concern in Scotland so long as a system remains in place.

Though Malcolm Spaven sheds some light into Scotland's post-1945 experience with his publication *Fortress Scotland: A Guide to the Military Presence*, little is actually understood of the country's interaction with the UK's nuclear deterrent, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) or even the Cold War.<sup>2</sup> In 1977 historian John Erickson wrote that:

For all the noisesomeness of sentimentality and the verbosity of nostalgia, 'defence' in its technical context has been left largely and deliberately unnoticed. Even more important, it is intended that it should go unnoticed. In the several feverish discussions of Scotland and its possible future, 'defence and foreign policy' drift quite casually by, they trip off the tongue of many, but it is not meant to be heard.<sup>3</sup>

While Erickson's interpretation of events was centred on the debate over constitutional status and its connotations to national security, Scotland's role in UK Defence planning has been overlooked and of low academic priority. In this particular instance, Trident, like NATO, has been disregarded by Scottish academics as these topics are customarily associated with modern British military history. Furthermore, studies of specific weapon systems are typically associated with research, development and operation. They very rarely investigate the specific influences a particular weapon might hold for communities in proximity to these systems. However, in terms of its impact on Scotland the reason for Trident's low

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<sup>2</sup> M. Spaven, *Fortress Scotland: A Guide to the Military Presence* (London: Pluto Press, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> J. Erickson, 'Scotland's Defence', in Robert Underwood (ed.), *The Future of Scotland* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), p. 154.

priority may be much simpler. Scotland has a complex, rich history that has been left with an over-abundance of unexplored research materials.

An explanation for the chosen period of study is also in order. The 1979-1999 time frame has been selected because the period runs from the beginning to the end of Trident's anti-Soviet deployment. The Carter administration's willingness to offer Britain the system was first seriously considered during the final months of the Callaghan government. The fourth and final Vanguard class SSBN arrived at Faslane in 1999. This marked the project's completion in that all the necessary components involving the British model for deterrence were in place.

Taken from a publication that was simply the transcript of a conversation between publisher and author, when asked if he was converted to Scottish Home Rule by the placing of the American and British nuclear submarine bases on the Clyde, prestigious author Alasdair Gray stated:

Most British Labour voters did not see why the USA, when she was the only nation to possess atomic weapons, refused to sign an international agreement banning their manufacture and use. Still less did we see why Britain (which now had no empire to defend) was joining an arms race with the two biggest empires which remained: especially when Japan and West Germany were becoming the world's foremost industrial nations because they were excluded from such weapon making. We could not understand it – there seemed no explanation but human blindness. Leading politicians in those days spoke as if nuclear war was a thing civilisation could survive, while at the same time building vastly expensive bunkers for themselves and their adherents all over the country. Bunkers for Scottish administrators were built under Edinburgh Zoo and the Glasgow Burrell Collection Gallery.

Furthermore, he states:

We were told that without nuclear weapons Britain would become second rate like Japan, West Germany and Scandinavian nations where the ordinary standard of living had risen mysteriously higher than that of Britain. Despite this publicity our trade unions and local Labour parties were so convinced by CND arguments that the 1960 Labour Party conference voted that Britain give up her nuclear defences - whereupon the leader of the parliamentary Labour Party said he would ignore the conference's decision. In this matter he was on the side of the Tories, and the parliamentary Labour Party has been on the side of the Tories in that and other matters ever since. At that time I was naively astonished...But our Labour leaders are supporting the fucking *British nuclear* so-called *deterrent* to the present day!<sup>4</sup>

For Gray the SSBN was only one of several reasons that supported the need for greater Scottish autonomy, but beneath his commentary on Labour's relationship with the deterrent thrives the justification for disarmament. To a limited extent this is a sentiment that still exists in Scotland to this day. Because it is an opinion important to the historiographical record, it, and Scotland's overall experience with Trident, must be addressed.

### **Core arguments**

The public's anxieties over Trident have receded considerably since 1980, and though the introduction of a replacement system in Scotland would most likely rekindle yet another heated controversy, at time of writing (2004) public interest

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<sup>4</sup> A. Gray, *Why Scots should rule Scotland 1997: A carnivorous history of Britain from Roman times until now* (Edinburgh: Canongate books, 1997), pp. 99-100.

in the system is minimal.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, one of the three core arguments presented in this thesis suggests that many people in Scotland accepted the view that Trident was a necessary contributor to national security. The promise of sustained employment in Scotland was a second reason to accept the system. Finally, the Scottish people did not actively oppose Trident because they had already become well acquainted with the Polaris system, Trident's predecessor. Yet before we proceed any further, at this point a background discussion over the UK's decision to procure a sea-based deterrent is necessary.

### **The Trident system: Background**

While successive British governments sought to impede the inevitable disintegration of empire, from 1945-1963 the submarine did not fit into UK Defence planning or its scheme for deterrence. Paul Rodgers, political scientist, described British politics in the late 1940s and 1950s as being 'dictated by a yearning for global status', focused on the need 'to maintain a global military presence' and having the desire to develop 'an independent nuclear force'.<sup>6</sup> By this time the Cold War had engulfed East and West, and because the 1956 Anglo-French-Israeli invasion of Suez shattered Britain's confidence in maintaining a sizeable military presence the decision to develop a nuclear deterrent was taken for two broad reasons. After 1945 the Attlee government assumed the Soviet Union would have a nuclear capability by the early 1950s and believed that a British bomb would

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<sup>5</sup> But so is interest in politics in general.

<sup>6</sup> GCUA P. Rodgers, *Trident – Bedrock of Britain's Defence into the 21st Century?*, The Cost of Trident – One Day National Conference (Glasgow, 10 June 1982). p. 2.

solidify the UK's position as a world power.<sup>7</sup> It was also assumed that a nuclear capability represented the only effective deterrent against an opponent's nuclear, biological or chemical threat, while simultaneously defending British national interests.<sup>8</sup> To overcome the American post-war ban on information on such weaponry, the UK began to test and deploy a number of bombs through the assistance of British contributors from the Manhattan Project in 1952.<sup>9</sup> Several designs were considered before a suitable weapon became fully operational.

The arrival of the jet bomber, with its ability to deliver devastating nuclear payloads, represented the first and only British model for airborne deterrence. By 1962 the Royal Air Force (RAF) successfully fielded three distinct medium-range nuclear-capable jet bombers.<sup>10</sup> These V-bombers, referred to as Vulcan, Victor and Valiant, involved one aircraft in each squadron being ready at fifteen minutes notice twenty-four hours a day; thirty per cent of available aircraft ready to deploy after four hours and that figure rising to 100 per cent after twenty hours.<sup>11</sup> Yet the bomber's role within the British nuclear defence strategy was all but extinguished in the mid-1950s as the stealthy American rocket-firing nuclear-powered submarine encouraged many in the UK government to reconsider.

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<sup>7</sup> Rodgers, *Trident*, p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> I. Clark, *Nuclear Diplomacy and the Special Relationship: Britain's deterrent and America 1957-1962*, (Oxford: OUP, 1994). See in its entirety.

<sup>9</sup> R.A. Norris, Andrew S. Burrows and Richard W. Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons: British, French and Chinese Nuclear Weapons* (Oxford: National Resources Defence Council, 1994), p. 102. For more information about the McMahon Act and the British bomb see B. Cathcart, *Test of Greatness: Britain's Struggle for the Atomic Bomb* (London: John Murray Publishers Ltd., 1995).

<sup>10</sup> The Vulcan medium bomber had a range of 2,500-3,000 miles

<sup>11</sup> D. Miller, *Cold War: A Military History* (London: Pimlico, 2001), p. 139. Maintenance of these strategic bombers, fuel consumption required to keep these bombers on twenty-four hour stand-by and the safety practices of transporting nuclear weapons aboard aircraft were of great concern. For

The discovery of German wartime attempts to place newly developed missiles within submarines, coinciding with American post-war development of thermonuclear weapons and the nuclear-powered submarine, led the US National Security Committee to approve the development of the world's first SSBN and SLBM system, known as Regulus, in 1955.<sup>12</sup> Not only had the USSR successfully deployed Sputnik, which encouraged the joint London and Washington policy against Soviet encroachment, but there was also the Kennedy administration's embarrassing cancellation of Skybolt. Harold Macmillan and his Conservative government were therefore provided with the necessary leverage with which to obtain the recently deployed American Polaris deterrent.<sup>13</sup> Macmillan had earlier convinced Washington to sell the UK Skybolt in exchange for the US Navy's use of the Holy Loch in Scotland for their Polaris forward operating base, a development that inspired the now legendary marches of the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (SCND).<sup>14</sup> Despite considerable public disapproval the Polaris Sales Agreement was concluded by April 1963, with the British government acquiring Polaris at low cost and its missiles intended for the development of a multilateral NATO force.<sup>15</sup> Scotland's populace became acquainted with both nuclear submarines and their powerful payloads soon after.

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more detailed information on the V-bomber see T. Laming, *V-Bombers; Vulcan, Victor and Valiant; Britain's Airborne Nuclear Deterrent* (Haynes Publishing, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Miller, *The Cold War*, p. 110.

<sup>13</sup> Skybolt was an attempt to use a bomber to launch a ballistic missile. The cancellation of the Skybolt programme meant that the RAF was fielding a nuclear deterrent force that was increasingly outmoded. The US also launched the Regulus and Regulus II programmes, which were inevitably replaced by the Polaris system. R. Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations in the Twentieth Century* (London: MacMillan Press, 1998), pp. 122-129; Miller, *The Cold War*, pp. 110-111.

<sup>14</sup> Due to its limitations in terms of range, a forward operating base allowed for the American Polaris missile to strike at the heart of the Soviet Union. Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations*, p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129. For further information on the UK Polaris deterrent's contribution to a NATO force see G.M. Dillon, *Dependence and Deterrence: Success and Civility in the Anglo-American Special Nuclear Relationship 1962-1982* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing, 1983), p. 35.

Due to the system's capabilities and consistent tensions between the US and USSR, the Royal Navy's decision to deploy the Resolution class Polaris system from Scotland was indeed controversial. Nevertheless, a working party considered several locations for the submarine's operating base, but both geographical and operational factors dictated that construction of the Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane Bay should commence.<sup>16</sup> Faslane had played an important military role since the early 1940s, the area was somewhat remote though Scotland's largest population centre, Glasgow, was within reasonable distance from the facility, and the Gareloch was considered advantageous because it was sheltered and in proximity to deep water.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Royal Naval Armament Depot (RNAD) Coulport, some thirteen miles by sea from Faslane, was constructed to perform missile servicing for the upcoming Polaris programme and Rosyth Dockyard in Fife was selected as the first British facility used for nuclear submarine refitting and refuelling operations.<sup>18</sup> Work began at Faslane on 22 May 1963, the day after the government placed orders for Polaris boats, and by 1968 Polaris submarines began the first of nearly 250 patrols.<sup>19</sup>

The successful operation of the UK's Polaris fleet enabled the Royal Navy to explore its options towards the end of the system's life expectancy. Yet the overwhelming confidence gained from this experience led to a failed attempt at

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<sup>16</sup> For a detailed summary of reasons why Faslane was chosen to host the Polaris nuclear deterrent see M. Chalmers, and W. Walker, *Uncharted Waters: The UK, Nuclear Weapons and the Scottish Question* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2001), pp. 17-25.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>18</sup> RNAD Coulport will be referred to as Coulport from this point. Clyde Submarine Base, later known as H.M. Naval Base Clyde, will be referred to as Faslane. Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 24-26. Rosyth Dockyard was selected to perform refits in 1963. Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, pp. 168-169.

<sup>19</sup> *TS*, 29 August 1996, p. 2; K. Hall, *Images of Scotland: The Clyde Submarine Base* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing Ltd, 2002), p. 59.

establishing a uniquely British system. By late June 1969 the RAF formally handed over responsibility for the nuclear deterrent to the Royal Navy as the dramatic improvement of Soviet radar and anti-Ballistic Missiles (ABMs) resulted in a protection of Moscow which Polaris warheads could not penetrate with absolute certainty.<sup>20</sup> Though the US initially offered the Poseidon system as a replacement for the increasingly outdated Polaris, the indigenous but troubled Chevaline programme was the UK's response to Soviet technical advancements. The system was designed to increase the likelihood of warhead survival by disguising incoming Polaris warheads as dummies to confuse Soviet ABM defences, but the UK's decision to go it alone caused the Royal Navy to fall behind in technological terms. The £4 billion programme included the need for new rocket engines; problems later surfaced with Polaris submarine hulls, and it did not provide for a Multiple Independent Re-entry Vehicle (MIRV).<sup>21</sup> However, the UK's improved Polaris boats would not begin patrols with the convoluted system until 1982. While the system was the subject of several refurbishment programmes, the US Navy launched its first Poseidon boat in 1968, equipped with the highly desirable MIRV capability.

The Ministry of Defence did not acquire Poseidon, but over time an order for another system would be placed. Poseidon was initially received with considerable interest, but by 1973 the American and British governments decided that it had no place in the Royal Navy as a deal could have threatened to undo the process of

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<sup>20</sup> B. Heuser, *NATO, Britain, France and the FRG: Nuclear strategies and Forces for Europe, 1949-2000* (London: MacMillan Press, 1999), p. 76; Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 59.

<sup>21</sup> MIRV was the ability to target each warhead independently on to separate targets. For a historical account on the Chevaline programme see Dillon, *Dependence and Deterrence*, p. 37; Miller, *The Cold War*, p. 141 and Ninth Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, *Chevaline Improvement to the Polaris Missile System*, HC 269 of Session 1981-1982.

détente that was well underway between Moscow and Washington.<sup>22</sup> The improving relationship between superpowers did not last, and during the latter half of the 1970s the Soviet Union unveiled new solid-fuel SS-20 missiles.<sup>23</sup> This weapon appeared to represent a means of waging a limited nuclear war in Europe by taking out airfields, bases, and cities in a pre-emptive first strike.<sup>24</sup> Because of the SS-20's capabilities it inspired the US to offer the UK the option of purchasing either ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCMs) or the new Trident system in the late 1970s as a replacement deterrent for the near obsolete Polaris.<sup>25</sup> With the Chevaline improvement programme coming at considerable cost and lacking a true MIRV capability, the recently elected Conservative government, led by Margaret Thatcher, opted to renew its status as a 'client of the Pentagon'.<sup>26</sup>

In the midst of the Cold War a replacement deterrent had to be able to pose a threat to the Soviet Union at least as credible as that initially posed by Polaris. The GLCM was seriously considered but it possessed several inadequacies. The UK would have had to purchase the hugely expensive system to ensure that the US could not fire these weapons without consent from the British government.<sup>27</sup> Thatcher further believed the Soviet Union could be persuaded that Britain might not agree to their use at a critical moment, while the system was only available to

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<sup>22</sup> For the Americans détente was seen as a way of managing the Russians and the Kremlin viewed it as an acknowledgement of their superpower status. A deal with the UK could have jeopardised the state of these relations. See Dillon, *Dependence and Deterrence*, p. 147.

<sup>23</sup> Détente had stalled after the spring of 1976, when the two superpowers experienced complications over issues such as human rights, disarmament and arms control. See J. Isaacs, and Taylor Downing, *The Cold War: for 45 Years the world held its breath* (London: Bantam Press, 1998).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 316-318.

<sup>25</sup> For more information see M. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years: 1979-1990* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), pp. 239-268.

<sup>26</sup> Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Considerable pressures against cruise in England did not contribute to the decision to deploy Trident in Scotland. The technical arrangement for cruise was known as a 'dual key' option.

West Germany if there was no 'German finger on the trigger'.<sup>28</sup> The GLCM also lacked the desirable stealth of a sea-based deterrent and by late September 1979 Britain discarded this option because the system was considered to be too vulnerable to attack.<sup>29</sup> Finally, cruise missiles proved highly contentious throughout England as some 120,000 activists marched in opposition to the American GLCM presence at Greenham Common in April and December 1983.<sup>30</sup> A combination of these factors detracted from its appeal and placed greater emphasis on Trident as the system essentially represented a Polaris force with greater capabilities and therefore improved security in terms of deterrence. Trident also possessed a MIRV capability that ultimately defeated an ABM system. General satisfaction obtained through Polaris since 1963 strengthened arguments for Trident, and the decision was to be finalised in the summer of 1980, with arrangements made to systematically phase out Polaris while simultaneously establishing Trident on the Clyde.

After rejecting both the Poseidon and GLCM systems, the government was ultimately forced to choose between two different Trident systems. In 1980 the Trident I C4 was considered by the Thatcher government to be the most up-to-date and credible deterrent. By purchasing the system from the US, the UK could be spared the burden of maintaining an expensive improvement programme similar to that of Chevaline. Letters exchanged between Thatcher and President Jimmy Carter on 15 July 1980 led to the UK's purchase of Trident in the midst of a series of

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on the complexities associated with the GLCM see Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 268.

<sup>29</sup> Dillon, *Dependence and Deterrence*, p. 88.

<sup>30</sup> P. Webber, Graeme Wilkinson and Barry Rubin, *Crisis over Cruise* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Publishing, 1983). See in its entirety.

negotiations.<sup>31</sup> Yet by 1981 the Reagan administration opted to enter full development of the Trident II D5 for the US Navy.<sup>32</sup> Defence Secretary John Nott was forced to study the implications. In 1981 the government believed that if it were to implement Trident I, it would have entered service with the Royal Navy only shortly before it left service with the US Navy.<sup>33</sup> Similar to the Chevaline programme, this implied that the UK alone would be responsible for keeping open special Trident support facilities in the US, forcing the UK to fund any research and development needed to counter further Soviet ABM defences.<sup>34</sup> Accordingly, the UK entered into agreement with the US on 11 March 1982 to purchase Trident II as described in Command Paper 8517.<sup>35</sup> It was this system that was ultimately established at Faslane (**Illustration 1**).

The Vanguard class Trident boat was an SSBN based on the British Trafalgar class nuclear-powered attack submarine design, incorporating a centrally-situated missile compartment based on a scaled down version of the missile compartment of the American Ohio class SSBN. While the US version possessed twenty-four missile tubes the British boat was to hold sixteen, as well as four torpedo tubes.

Furthermore, each boat was to be powered by a Rolls Royce pressurised water PWR-2 nuclear reactor, giving the submarine a top speed of around 25 knots. Four

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<sup>31</sup> For more on Trident negotiations with the Carter administration see Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 244-248.

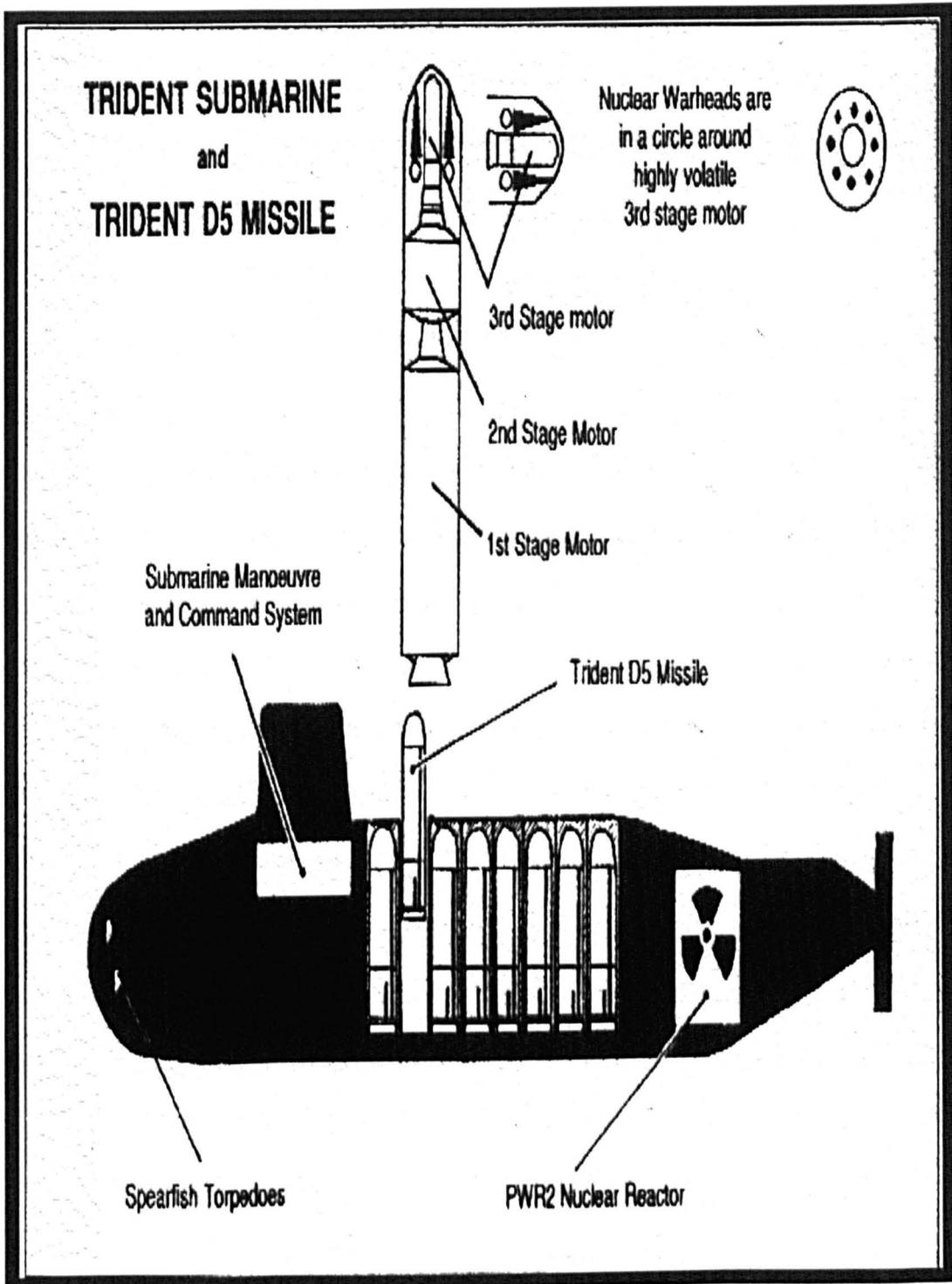
<sup>32</sup> *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 12 Col 410, 13 November 1981; Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 157, 247.

<sup>33</sup> This observation now appears to be incorrect as the C4 system will serve with the US Navy Pacific fleet until at least 2007, when the second Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty will reduce the number of US Ohio class Trident boats from 18 to 14. Hutchinson, *Submarines, War Beneath the Waves: from 1776 to the present day* (London: Harper Collins, 2001), p. 186.

<sup>34</sup> *The Trident Missile Programme*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) Vol 19 Col 981, 1 March 1982.

<sup>35</sup> Trident II D5 will be referred to as simply Trident from this point. *The British Strategic Nuclear Force*, Cmd. 8517 (London: HMSO, 11 March 1982).

**Illustration 1: Trident SSBN and SLBM**



Trident submarines would replace the previous Polaris boats, and they were scheduled to remain in service until at least the year 2020 (Figure 1).<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 1: Trident SSBN Specifications<sup>37</sup>**

<b>Length</b>	491 feet (149.6 meters)
<b>Hull Diameter</b>	43.3 feet (13.2 meters)
<b>Height</b>	4 stories
<b>Displacement</b>	16,000 tonnes submerged
<b>Speed</b>	25 knots submerged
<b>Power Plant</b>	1 pressurised water PWR-2 nuclear reactor
<b>Navigation System</b>	Gearred steam turbines, 1 shaft
<b>Crew</b>	132
<b>Armaments</b>	4 torpedo tubes - Spearfish torpedoes 16 Trident II SLBMs carrying up to 128 Mark IV 100 kiloton MIRVs.

The Trident SLBM was a three stage, solid propellant, inertially guided fleet ballistic missile with greater range and improved accuracy over Polaris, capable of carrying a maximum of twelve warheads per missile.<sup>38</sup> The missiles were fuelled by Nitrate Ester Plasticized Polyethylene Glycol, a solid fuel, and had a range greater than 7,400 km (4,000 nautical miles, 4,800 statute miles) at full payload, or 11,000 kilometres at reduced payload. Furthermore, every boat potentially carried 192 British MIRVed warheads similar to the American W76, each capable of a 100-kiloton yield and estimated to be at least eight to twenty times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima.<sup>39</sup> The missile was also expected to have an in-tube life of at least seven years, twice that of the Polaris system, greatly reducing

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<sup>36</sup> Actual top speed was classified. Thatcher's government retained the option to construct an additional fifth submarine in due course, costing, at 1980 estimates, an additional £600 million including missiles. Norris, Burrows and Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 102

<sup>37</sup> This information was compiled from: B. Aldridge, *Trident Submarines: American and British* (Santa Clara California: Pacific Life Research Centre. 7 February 1999), p. 3; Norris, Burrows and Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 102

<sup>38</sup> Aldridge, *Trident Submarines*, p. 3.

<sup>39</sup> Norris, Burrows and Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 102; J. Ainslie, *Trident: Britain's Weapon of Mass Destruction* (Glasgow: Scottish CND, 1999), p. 4.

maintenance that would have to be performed aboard the submarine.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the Trident SLBM was fitted with NAVSTAR satellite receivers resulting in a circular error probable (CEP) of ninety metres, making it a genuine hard target attack system with a range enabling it to hit any target in the world from any ocean (**Figure 2**).<sup>41</sup> CEP was a term used to describe the delivery precision of a system, and it is the radius of a circle, centred upon the mean point of impact, within which fifty per cent of the warheads aimed at the target will fall. Due to the operational success with Polaris, the Trident fleet was to be stationed in the west of Scotland at Faslane with warheads stored and serviced at Coulport.

**Figure 2: Trident SLBM Specifications**<sup>42</sup>

<b>Description</b>	A three stage, solid propellant, inertially-guided fleet ballistic missile with greater range/payload capability and improved accuracy over Polaris SLBMs.
<b>Specifications</b>	
<b>Length</b>	13.6 m (44.6 ft)
<b>Diameter</b>	2.18 m (83 in)
<b>Missile Weight/minus warhead</b>	57,700 kg (127,000 lbs)
<b>Stages</b>	Three
<b>Fuel</b>	Solid
<b>Guidance</b>	Mk-6 Stellar-aided inertial
<b>Throwweight</b>	2800 kg (6160 lbs)
<b>Range</b>	7,400 km at full payload 11,000 km with reduced payload
<b>Nuclear warheads</b>	British MIRVed warheads enclosed in US Mark IV re-entry body, possibly Deployed on US 'warhead bus'.
<b>Number of Warheads</b>	Probably four, up to eight; theoretical maximum of 15-16 warheads.
<b>Yield</b>	estimated 100 kilotons

<sup>40</sup> *The Trident Missile Programme*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 19 Col 984, 1 March 1982.

<sup>41</sup> NAVSTAR provided mid-course navigational updates to the inertial system. A hardened target such as a missile silo or command bunker protected against the effects of nuclear weapons. Miller, *The Cold War*, p. 113, 445.

<sup>42</sup> Information compiled from: Aldridge, *Trident Submarines*, p. 3; Norris, Burrows and Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 102

In 1985 construction under the Trident Works Programme began refurbishment at the Base to accommodate the Vanguard class, while responsibilities for Trident's missiles and torpedoes were handled at Coulport on Loch Long. Coulport was suited to meet the needs of the missile system; it was situated on the west coast of the Rosneath peninsula, and was originally designed to maintain and arm Polaris missiles. Upon the arrival of Trident boats at Coulport, stored warheads were to be mated to missiles while aboard the submarine, leaving the boat armed for its patrol at sea and prepared to launch lethal payloads within fifteen minutes of the given order (**Photograph 1**). Because of the SSBN's awesome capabilities, operational characteristics and the role it served in British and Soviet military planning, 'the world's most powerful submarine weapons platform' was received in the west of Scotland with noticeable apprehension (**Photograph 2**).<sup>43</sup>

The system was to be refitted and refuelled in Fife. Rosyth Dockyard had successfully maintained the Resolution class since 1968 and most Scots naturally assumed the facility would continue these responsibilities with Trident. Though the fourth boat only became operational in 1999, the initial plan was that while two Vanguard class boats performed sixty day patrols, a third submarine would ideally be under refit at Rosyth while the fourth was to be at Faslane preparing for its next mission. In this context, after roughly eight years at sea a Trident boat would be ready for servicing.<sup>44</sup> Rosyth was the major refitting centre for Polaris and was the only location in all of Britain capable of overhauling, updating and replacing the reactor cores of Trident submarines at that time (**Map 1**).

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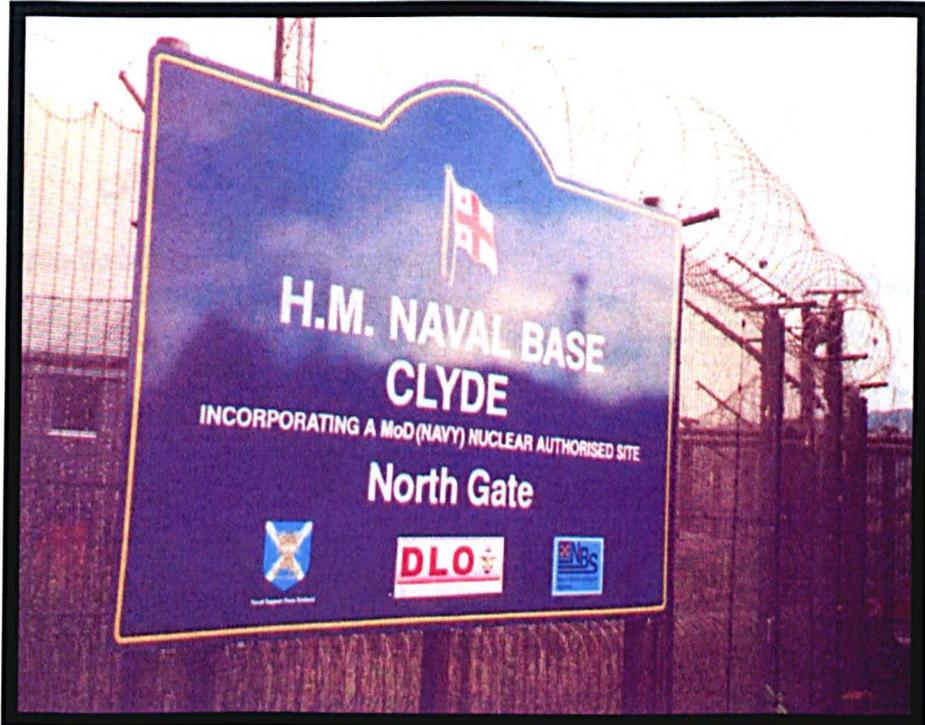
<sup>43</sup> Hutchinson, *Submarines, war beneath the waves*, p. 186.

<sup>44</sup> Refuelling involved a lengthy technical process. Accurate descriptions of the refit process is available in Chapter 2. Norris, Burrows and Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 117.

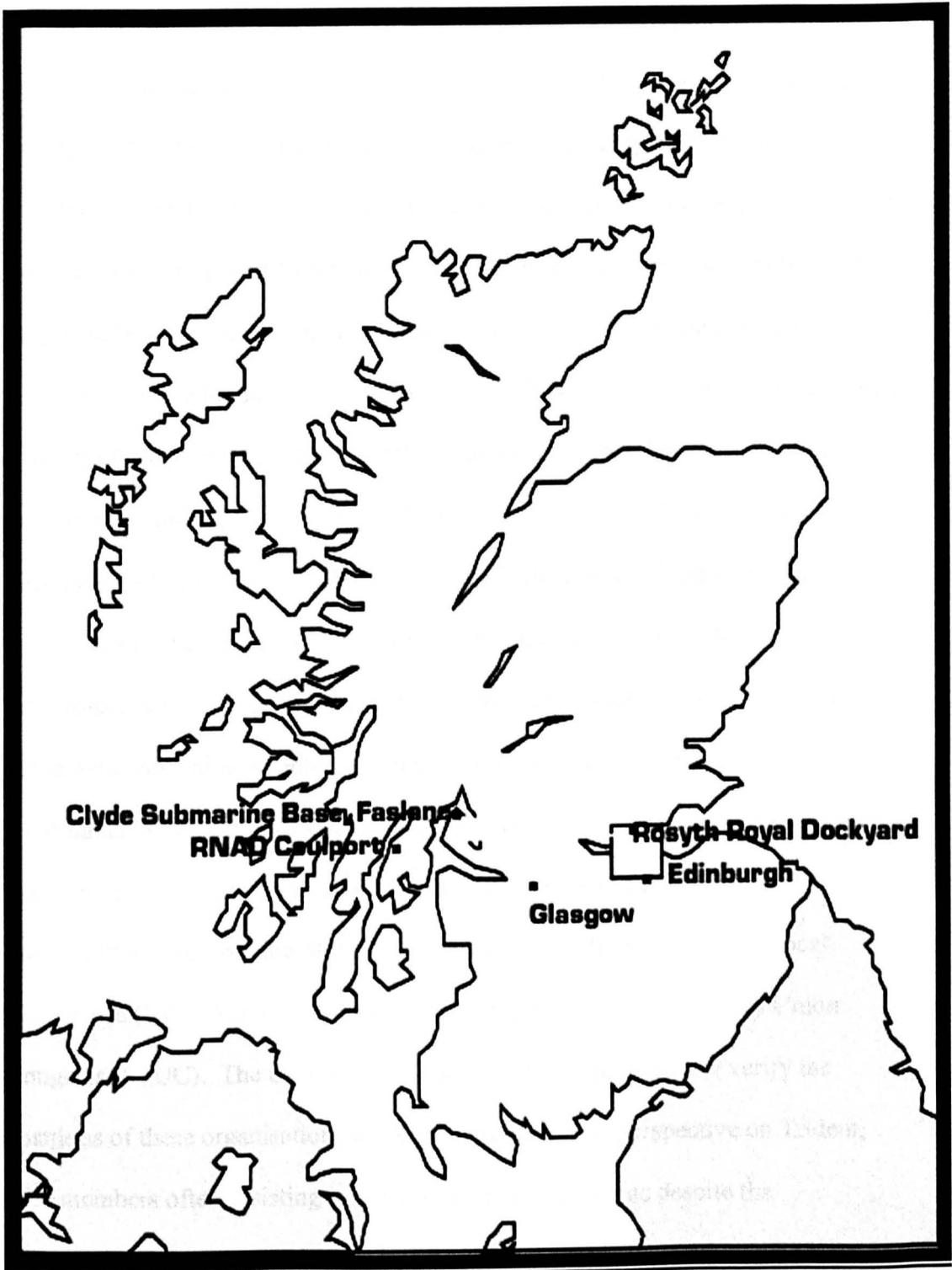
**Photograph 1: Trident on the Clyde**



**Photograph 2: The North Gate at Faslane**



**Map 1: Trident shore facilities in Scotland**



## Sources

At this stage of the introduction an explanation of the sources utilised by this study is in order. Successful completion of this thesis inevitably required the marriage of two distinct subjects: Trident the system and the familiarity of the Scottish people with the deterrent. Official sources included several publications such as materials from *Hansard*, House of Commons Defence Committee reports, and Notices of Proposed Development from the Ministry of Defence, all of which provided one component of the foundation for this research. This base of information was further bolstered through the accompaniment of studies from both the Central Unit for Procurement and the National Audit Office. Without the inclusion of these documents, little would be understood of the Trident Works Programme, the complications it experienced or the economic, environmental and human investment this project involved. Independent studies from a range of sources in Scotland, along with applicable pamphlets, council minutes, official statements and environmental impact assessments were also required to underline the Scottish experience. This material included Strathclyde Regional Council's 1983 Coulport Inquiry, literature from the SCND, assessments from the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) and relevant information from the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC). The inclusion of these vital materials served to verify the positions of these organisations when investigating their perspective on Trident, with members often assisting in locating various documents despite the inconvenience this usually involved. Finally, it should be noted that in order to further reinforce this aspect of the study, time-consuming travel throughout both the

Strathclyde and Fife territories was necessary to acquire several hundred clippings from local newspapers in proximity to Trident's shore facilities.

Scotland's ongoing experience with nuclear weaponry represents an important chapter in its story, yet from an historical perspective surprisingly little has been written on this. While the subject of Scotland and the national deterrent appears to have been disregarded, there is research on Trident but not work that covers the Scottish dimension as fully as this thesis. G.M. Dillon's *Dependence and Deterrence: Success and Civility in the Anglo-American Special Nuclear Relationship 1962-1982* or Bob Aldridge's *Trident Submarines: American and British* are two examples, but these publications made no attempt whatsoever to explore the Scottish dimension of Trident. Malcolm Spaven's *Fortress Scotland* briefly mentions the national deterrent, but because this work was published previous to the construction phase at Faslane it is only able to provide limited background information on the system. Furthermore, authors of recent modern Scottish history books rarely incorporate Trident into their contents, and if the subject is mentioned it is, more often than not, a brief explanation of its controversy north of the Border. The one political study that specifically addressed this issue was Malcolm Chalmers and William Walker's publication *Uncharted Waters: The UK, Nuclear Weapons and the Scottish Question*, which offered a fascinating glimpse into the complexities associated with the potential relocation of the system. Yet while their work makes known the consequences of getting the 'politics of this issue wrong', this thesis is different because it explores the historical experiences of civil society, the disarmament movement, and Scottish political parties over a

twenty year period.<sup>45</sup> Additionally, this research provides detailed investigation into both the Fife and Strathclyde Region's interaction with the system. These five subjects serve to set these two works apart.

Other publications have touched upon the Scottish dimension of Trident, but they have not attempted to grasp the issue adequately. Angie Zelter's publication on defiance in Scotland, *Trident on Trial: the Case for People's Disarmament*, was concerned primarily with the disarmament movement's attempts to decommission the system. Moreover, her work is focused on advancing the movement's cause, is primarily based on personal experiences and, understandably, makes no attempt at impartiality. Both F.D.R. Yell's *Trident Facilities* and Keith Hall's *Images of Scotland: the Clyde Submarine Base* discussed the necessary preparations for Trident establishments at the Gareloch site, but neither makes an attempt to address the Scottish experience. Hall's work is largely a local history of the Helensburgh area, while Yell's publication is concerned with the technical aspect of Trident and the efforts of those who contributed to the system. Unlike this particular study it was not the intention of any of these publications to consider Scotland's interaction with the national deterrent. Therefore, a methodical effort in fusing together scraps of information, piece by piece, would be required.

To fill several historical gaps it was necessary for this researcher to seek out appropriate alternative sources. Nearly fifty written correspondences and in-depth

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<sup>45</sup> Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 154.

interviews with numerous Members of the British and Scottish Parliaments, individuals from Scottish civil society and the disarmament movement was essential. Due to the classified nature of this topic interviews with relevant figures like David Corbett, former Project Manager at Rosyth Royal Dockyard and former Project Management Applications Programmer responsible for the Faslane Development Management Reporting System, proved invaluable to this research. Yet this approach brought with it several complications. Oral and contemporary history relies on living people as sources of information and because of this there are several potential pitfalls. Because oral history uses spoken sources the allowable evidence expands dramatically. Much also depends on the accuracy of the interviewee's memory and there is the possibility of inconsistency or incorrect information. Furthermore, oral history, like written and contemporary history, is likely to contain either personal or social biases.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, the accuracy of memory has been tested against other sources of information and the integrity of these individual responses was strengthened through numerous conversations with other relevant figures to ensure consistency. Yet it should be noted that without oral and written contributions this thesis could not have been successfully completed.

## **Methodology**

Though this research is important to Scottish history the topic is very recent, and highly classified, with the researcher only able to collect information that was available to the public domain. This included oral and written testimony, yet in

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<sup>46</sup> See P. Thompson, *The voice of the past: oral history* (Oxford: OUP, 2000).

many instances there was a noticeable reluctance for some participants to discuss certain specific issues. This obstinacy may have stemmed from fear of violating the Official Secrets Act or concerns that such discussion conflicted with the interests of their employers. Those opposed to the deterrent's presence in Scotland were naturally more prepared to make their feelings known, yet the sheer volume of response from advocates for disarmament potentially made for a lopsided depiction. Other times the researcher was granted formal interviews with Scottish Members of Parliament who did not openly oppose Trident but the author was later left, on several occasions, abandoned. Finally, there was, at times, a willingness from some to contribute to this research but in certain instances participants chose to remain anonymous for fear of the potential implications to their careers.

When researching contemporary history theoretical problems are not uncommon, as it is generally vulnerable to future developments still left to unfold. This particular study is not exempt from this problem as the UK's Trident system is currently in operation (2004), and is both a classified and controversial issue. A considerable portion of the information pertaining to the presently classified weapon is not readily available for public consumption, and unbiased research of Scotland's experience remains non-existent. Therefore, the topic demanded the careful assembly of widely scattered information that was ultimately subject to the future developments of a system that the Royal Navy expected to maintain until well into the next millennium. A greater volume of information pertaining to the system will not become available until well after decommissioning, and even then relevant materials will undoubtedly be limited in nature due to the fact that the project involved various submarine, missile and warhead technologies.

When contemplating the Scottish dimension of Trident several questions immediately spring to mind. How is Scotland's reaction to Trident best described and to what extent did national security influence the public's judgment? Because both Polaris and Trident were stealthy systems, did this feature influence Scottish opinion? It is also essential to understand the economic impact Trident had on Scottish civil society. Therefore the question must be asked, how concerned were the Scots about the presence of the Polaris replacement system, and did safety, the state of the economy and the potential for greater employment have a role in Trident's success? Did the country's long-standing dependence on the defence and heavy industries also play a role in Scotland's suitability for accommodating the system? Furthermore, if Scotland's imperial past was bound up with economic interests did its past experience with empire somehow apply to the SSBN? Since the arrival of Polaris the disarmament movement's position on nuclear weapons has been made transparent. Nevertheless, was the geographic location of where Trident would reside a factor in public protest? Finally, what were the chances of ridding Scotland of Trident after its successful completion in 1999? These are the issues that will be addressed within this thesis

This study opens with a discussion pertaining to the Strathclyde territory, the operational centre for Trident's operations and ground zero for the debate in Scotland. The Trident Works Programme is subjected to analysis, and we attempt to gauge the Strathclyde Region's general response to Trident over two decades. The system's environmental record, and reputation for safe operation, is also brought to light. We then discuss local government's experience with the system, and reveal the true economic impact of Trident to the area (**Appendix A**). Because

refits for the Vanguard class submarine were originally intended for the region of Fife, the following chapter will examine the experiences of those in the east of Scotland. Projects designed to prepare the Dockyard for the system's arrival are presented, and there is an attempt to determine the Fife Region's general response to Trident. Safety practices at this facility are considered, but then it is necessary to investigate local government's experience with losing Trident. Because the Dockyard's responsibilities for the SSBN were stripped away in the post-Cold War era, one must consider the industrial competition that provided for this most controversial result. At this point we will have established an understanding of the experiences of those who resided in direct proximity to the three major Trident facilities in Scotland.<sup>47</sup>

Moving on to the Scottish political dimension of Trident, Chapter Three evaluates the performance of those who were elected to represent the interests of their constituents. Therefore, the political reaction to the system over the 1979-1999 time frame is investigated. Chapter Four then makes an attempt to gauge the direct response of Scottish civil society to the system's procurement, construction and operation. This analysis includes reactions from seven components, including Scotland's religious community, its legal system and universities, the media and public opinion. Finally, because Trident was once an intense issue in Scotland it is ideal to complete this study by evaluating the obstacles and strategies of the disarmament movement. Both the anti-Polaris and anti-Trident movements are also considered. The conclusions are presented in Chapter Six, and matters concerning

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<sup>47</sup> The Vulcan Naval Nuclear Propulsion Test Establishment located in Dounreay was used as a test facility for Trident's reactor. Scottish CND also believed that its weapons contained plutonium and

**national security, economic necessity and Scottish indifference to Trident are evaluated.**

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**tritium from the nuclear power station in Chapelcross, located in the southwest of Scotland near Dumfries.**

## **Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region**

Years previous to the Cold War's conclusion the territory of Strathclyde was immersed in controversy, as it was this region that was designated to be the site of the UK's Trident SSBN and SLBM. However, even before the fall of communism in Eastern Europe it is unequivocal that Scottish concerns with the system and its shore facilities subsided considerably, leaving many Strathclyde residents no longer viewing Trident as an issue of overwhelming importance. The intention of this chapter is to explore the various reasons for this. Despite the earliest forewarnings from Trident's adversaries it appears that the system and those associated with its operation performed their responsibilities impeccably. Furthermore, Trident's shore facilities provided indispensable employment opportunities and secure, safe operation of the system gathered no unfavourable attention to Trident. Nevertheless, to comprehend fully the region's experience with Trident it is imperative for this chapter to highlight a number of the system's shortfalls. During the Cold War Dumbarton District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council fiercely opposed the system, in terms of employment it consistently failed to satisfy predictions, and despite Trident's safety record there remained lingering concerns with firepower and safety after the fall of the Soviet Union. To appreciate fully the region's experience with the system, interviews with former local councillors, Faslane employees, and documentation from Strathclyde Regional Council assisted greatly in this process. From a Scottish perspective it appears that along with Trident's successes have come a number of deficiencies. The Trident Works Programme was a prime example of this.

## **Coulport and Faslane: From their origins to the Trident Works Programme**

Water had been a significant influence in the industrial development of the Faslane area since the late eighteenth century, with the origins of the submarine base dating back to February 1941 after a subcommittee of the Committee of Imperial Defence established Military Port No. 1 at Faslane Bay (**Photograph 1.1,1.2**).<sup>1</sup> Yet the Port became increasingly irrelevant during the Second World War as skilled dock troops were relocated to the south coast while preparations for the invasion of Europe were completed. According to author Keith Hall's concise account of the Clyde Submarine Base, from February 1944 staffing levels at Faslane were systematically downsized, and by July 1946 the property was leased to the shipbreaking firm, Metal Industries.<sup>2</sup> This by no means marked the end of operations at the facility. The Base did face closure in the post-war era but tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union, along with dramatic improvements in the fields of nuclear propulsion, ballistic missiles and various other submarine technologies, brought with it a replacement for the outdated hydrogen peroxide powered boat.<sup>3</sup> These developments caused Faslane's stock to skyrocket as the nuclear age of the British submarine was set to commence.

Through American technical assistance, Scotland's interaction with nuclear submarines began soon after the completion of HMS *Dreadnought* in October 1960.<sup>4</sup>

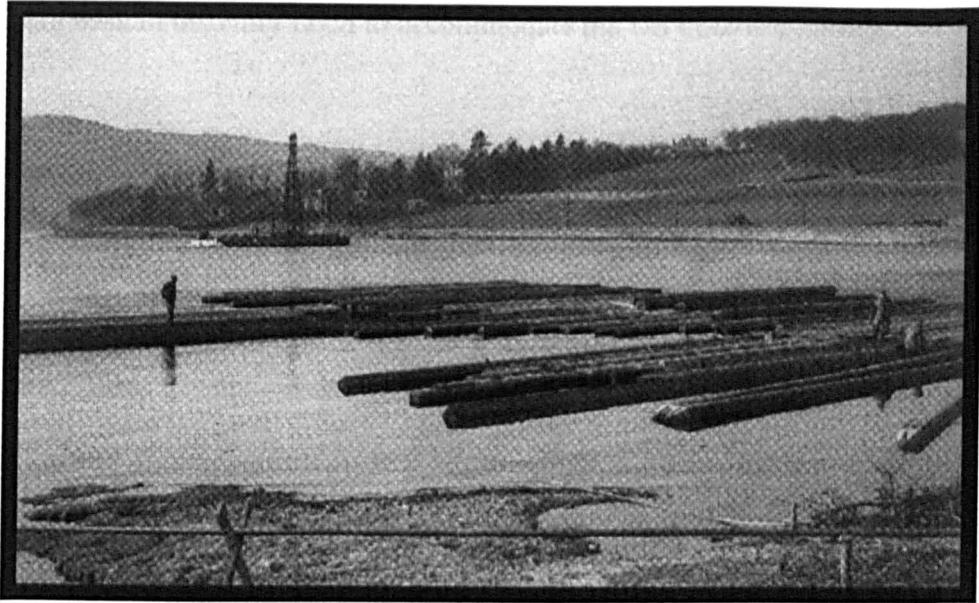
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<sup>1</sup> Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

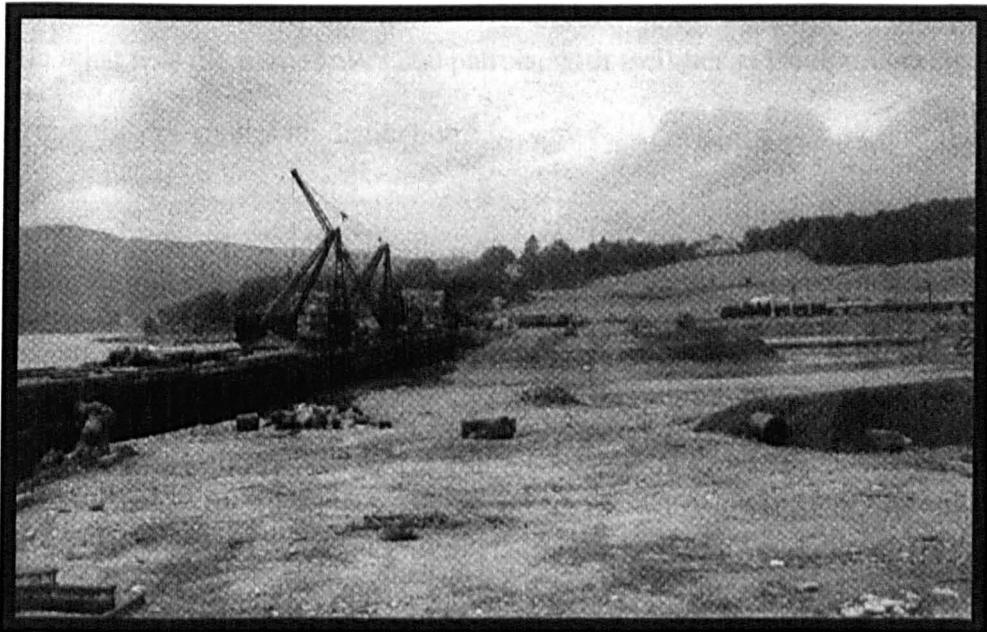
<sup>3</sup> After the Second World War the British experimented with Hydrogen Peroxide/Kerosine engines which could be used both above and below the surface. The results were not encouraging enough for this technique to be adopted at the time.

**Photograph 1.1: Faslane Bay, 1941**



In 1941 the materials for Military Port No. 1 started to arrive.

**Photograph 1.2: Faslane Bay, 1941**



At this point the piling for the lighterage jetty was nearing completion, with the infilling under way.

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<sup>4</sup> The Americans launched USS Nautilus, the world's first nuclear submarine, in 1955. US Admiral Rickover visited the UK and laid the grounds for the 1958 US/UK Agreement allowing greater cooperation between the US and Royal Navy. Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, pp. 53-55.

By 1961, and to the dissatisfaction of the SCND, the Americans established a forward operating base in the Holy Loch to accommodate the US Polaris deterrent.

Refurbishment at Faslane and the construction of Coulport was also required after Harold Macmillan secured an arrangement with President Kennedy to grant Britain the system in May 1963.<sup>5</sup> Previously, the Admiralty produced a list of possible alternative bases throughout the UK but, after extensive deliberation, geographical suitability and arguments on operational grounds dictated that Faslane was the Royal Navy's most suitable choice for its Resolution class fleet.<sup>6</sup> Though both Coulport and Faslane were not fully operational by the time of the system's first patrol, all major services functioned sufficiently to ensure the system's well-being.<sup>7</sup> The Polaris fleet soon formed the 10th Submarine Squadron with the Port, renamed Clyde Submarine Base HMS *Neptune*, commissioned in 1967. The first of this class sailed on 15 June 1968 on what was the first of over 200 patrols, with facilities at Coulport and Faslane supporting the deterrent with distinction.<sup>8</sup>

In the Strathclyde Region several communities were within proximity to Coulport and Faslane, including Dumbarton, Dunoon, Greenock and Helensburgh, with Glasgow being Scotland's major population component some twenty-six miles southeast of the facility (Map 1.1).<sup>9</sup> As Polaris submarines set off on their assigned patrols, they travelled through the Gareloch, into the River Clyde, past Loch Long and the Holy Loch, and through to the Clyde Firth. With Dumbarton situated further east down the

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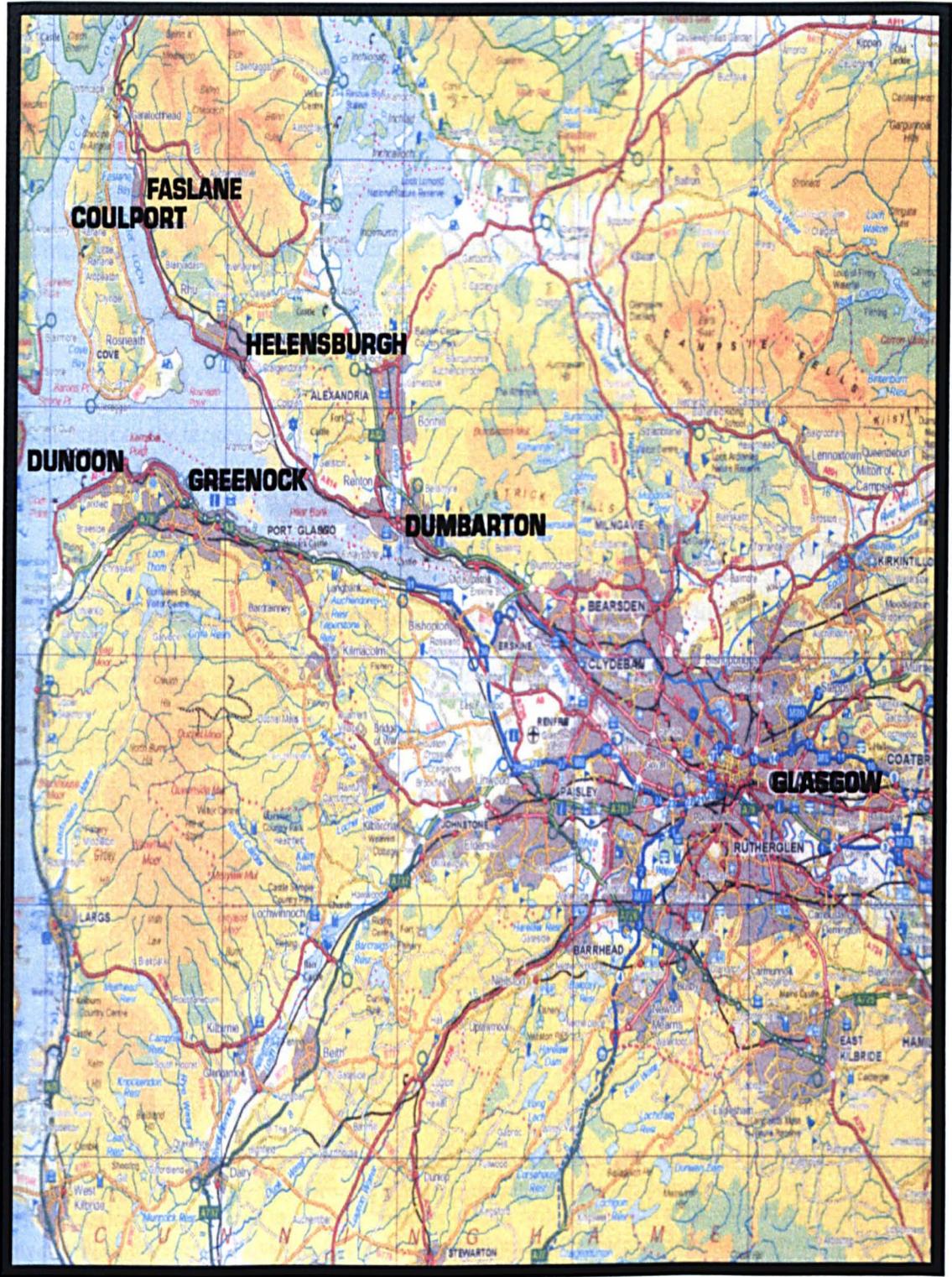
<sup>5</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement.

<sup>6</sup> For a fascinating look at these developments see: Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, pp. 17-21.

<sup>7</sup> P. Nailor, *The Nassau Connection: The Organisation and Management of the British Polaris Project* (London: HMSO Publications, 1988), p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 100.

**Map 1.1: Communities in Proximity to Trident Facilities**



<sup>9</sup> Communities surrounding Faslane included Cardross, Coulport, Cove, Dumbarton, Garelochhead,

River Clyde, these boats passed communities such as Rhu, Rosneath, Helensburgh and Dunoon before either docking at Coulport for service or reaching the open sea (**Photograph 1.3**). Because nuclear submarines had become a common sight for Strathclyde residents, they were well acquainted with the SSBN over time. Yet after a decade of service an ageing system that was falling behind in technological terms encouraged central government to contemplate its replacement. As has been noted in the introduction, the Thatcher government opted to acquire the upgraded Trident system in March 1982.<sup>10</sup> Due to Coulport and Faslane's successful service of Polaris, both sites were to retain their status and undergo expansion in order to accommodate the significantly larger Trident programme (**Photograph 1.4**).

One cannot overstate the massive undertaking that the Trident Works Programme represented as it was similar in complexity to both the Channel Tunnel works and the extraction of North Sea oil, requiring thirteen years to complete involving roughly 110 separate projects.<sup>11</sup> On 2 June 1981 the Ministry of Defence released its first Notice of Proposed Development and emphasised that works services on the new site had to be completed by the end of the decade, accentuating the government's push to begin construction.<sup>12</sup> While Faslane would serve as port for the larger Vanguard class, Coulport, which not only handled strategic missiles for Polaris but also high explosive torpedoes and possibly thermonuclear tactical missiles, would also be modified to

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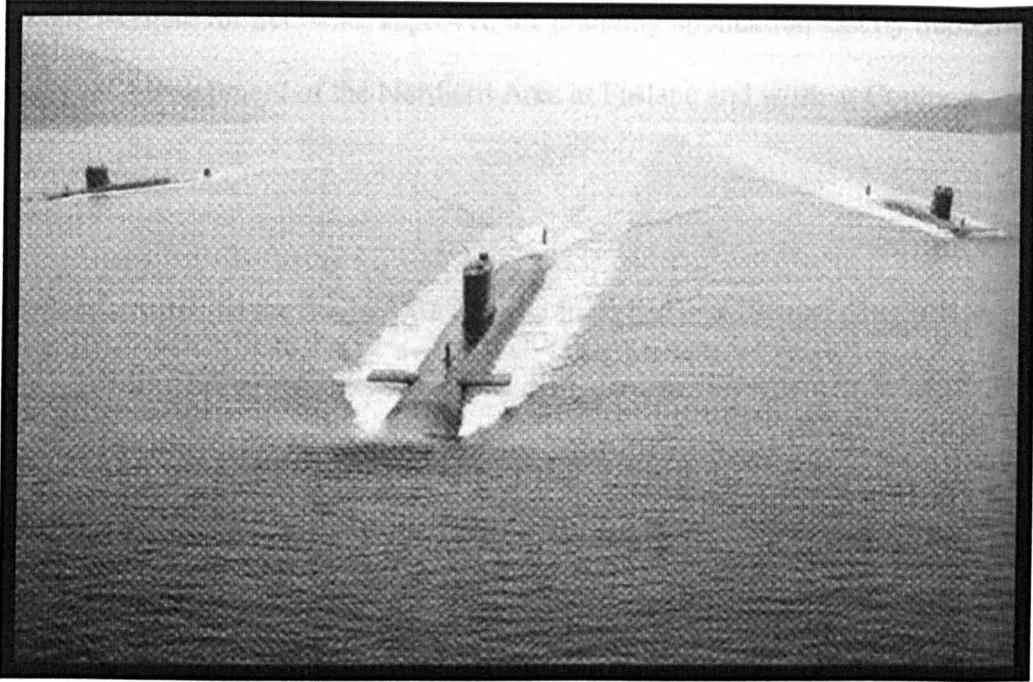
Glasgow, Gourock, Greenock, Helensburgh, Kilcreggan, Port Glasgow, Rosneath and Rhu.

<sup>10</sup> It was seriously considered that cruise would be able to strike at a wider range of military targets and might well be cheaper to acquire and operate. Report from the Defence Committee, *Memoranda on Strategic Weapons Policy*, Session 1980-1981, p. 28

<sup>11</sup> The Channel Tunnel was a rail link between the UK and France beneath the English Channel. Ninth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 237 of Session 1989-90, p. 17.

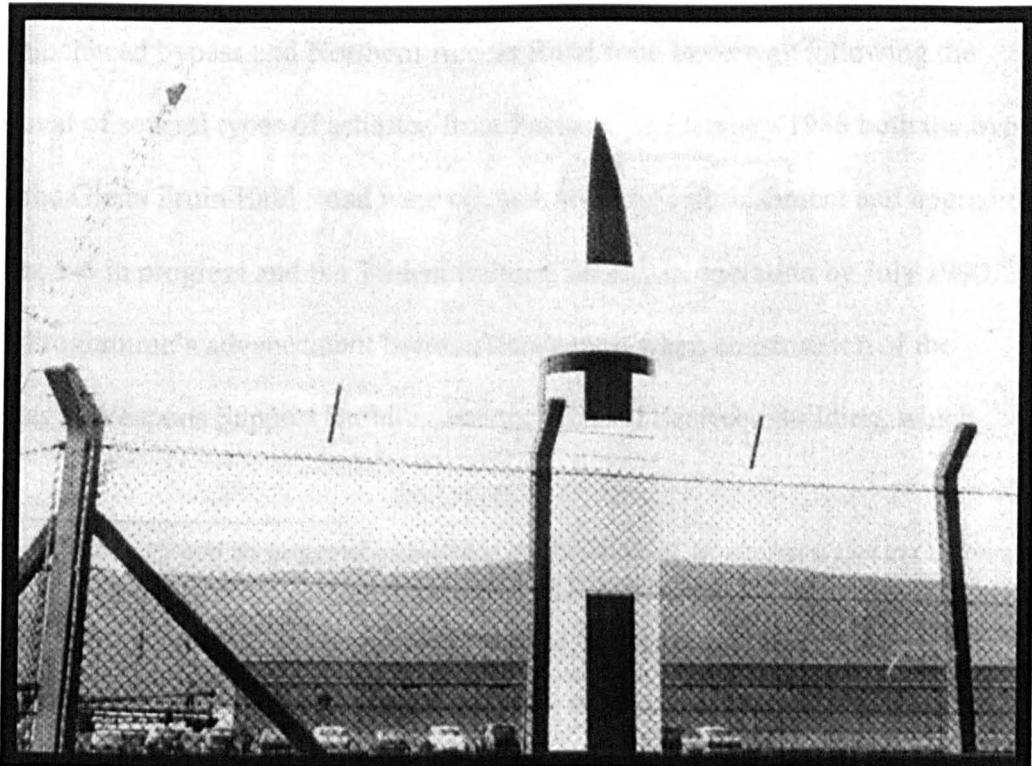
<sup>12</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Notice of Proposed Development: Proposed Development of a site for the Trident Weapon System (D/Lands/501/14F)*, 2 June 1981, p. 1.

**Photograph 1.3: Resolution class Polaris submarines**



Three-quarters of the Polaris fleet cruising down what appears to be the Gareloch.

**Photograph 1.4: Entrance to Polaris School at Faslane**



Power and Pride: SLBM gracing the entrance to the Polaris School at Faslane.

service Trident's more powerful warheads.<sup>13</sup> On 7 March 1985 George Younger, Secretary of State for Scotland, approved the planning application and by September of that year development of the Northern Area at Faslane and work at Coulport commenced.<sup>14</sup>

To deflect any doubts the Soviet Union might have had with British determination while overriding heavy resistance from the disarmament movement in Strathclyde, the Ministry of Defence pushed forward the Trident Works Programme with tremendous speed. In August 1985 plans for the Trident training facility were released, and by December formal proposals for projects such as the Shiplift, berth 12, the finger jetty, and the Northern Utilities Building (NUB) were submitted to Dumbarton District Council. By 1986, plans for ancillary hardstandings, roads, perimeter fences and berths 1-4 were also presented, with initial works at Coulport, and construction of the Garelochhead bypass and Northern Access Road soon underway following the removal of several types of asbestos from Faslane.<sup>15</sup> In January 1988 both the bypass and the Glenn Fruin Haul Road were opened, with the refurbishment and upgrading of berths 1-6 in progress and the Trident training facility in operation by July 1990.<sup>16</sup> The Programme's advancement became transparent when construction of the Strategic Weapons Support Building and the General Services Building, which

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<sup>13</sup> *Report of Inquiry into the proposed extension of the Royal Naval Armaments Depot at Coulport, Dumbarton, for the Trident Weapon System 20/24 June*, 9 September 1983, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 99.

<sup>15</sup> PSA, *UK Trident training facility: Notice of Proposed Development (Clyde Submarine Base)*, August 1985; PSA, *Shiplift and Berth 12, Finger Jetty and Utilities building: Notice of Proposed Development (Clyde Submarine Base)*, December 1985; PSA, *Notice of Proposed Development: General Services Building, Boilerhouse 1, and paintstore; stores building; and ancillary roads (Clyde Submarine Base)*, July 1986; PSA, *RNAD Coulport Depot Perimeter Fence Upgrade: Notice of Proposed Development (PSA Directorate of Defence Services II)*, 1986; PSA, *Extension and Refurbishment of Naval Technical Department Facilities and Berths 1,2,3 and 4 facilities: Notice of Proposed Development (Clyde Submarine Base)*, November 1986; Third Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 356 of Session 1986-87, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup> Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 99

housed both Trident crews and the Submarine Training Centre, was completed by 1991.<sup>17</sup> By 1992 Coulport's explosives handling jetty was floated and towed to Hunterston, and its generating station, jetty access roads, support areas, and the explosives' area main works handed over.<sup>18</sup> Following the satisfactory completion of all contract work, the finger jetty, with its 125 tonne and 20 tonne cranes, was delivered to Faslane in September of that year. Furthermore, the NUB became operational and dredging work in Rhu Narrows was completed in October 1992, with the Ministry of Defence assuming full responsibility for the facility in December.<sup>19</sup> On 19 August 1993 the Northern Development Area Trident Support Facilities were officially opened by Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Defence, with the Clyde Submarine Base renamed *HM Naval Base Clyde* in October 1996.<sup>20</sup> By this time Faslane had already received the first three Vanguard class boats, with only *HMS Vengeance* set to arrive by 1999.<sup>21</sup>

This compact synopsis of the Trident Works Programme suggests a smooth transition between systems, yet superficial analysis ultimately proves deceiving. By June 1989 the estimates for works at Coulport had risen from £222 million to £275 million and works at Faslane had risen from £267 million to £339 million, with much of the increase in cost attributed to pay and unexpected additions to the Programme.<sup>22</sup> By mid-1991 key elements in the project were up to two years behind schedule and the

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<sup>17</sup> Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 99.

<sup>18</sup> Sixth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 549 of Session 1992-93, p. 28.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*; Hall, *The Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 99.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>21</sup> Built at VSEL Barrow-in-Furness, these boats also included *HMS Vanguard*, *Victorious* and *Vigilant*

<sup>22</sup> Fifth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 374 of Session 1988-89, p. 21; Ninth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 237 of Session 1989-90, p.19.

scheme was reported to be running at more than double the original estimates.<sup>23</sup> The reasons for delay were numerous, but it is apparent that ever-improving nuclear safety standards hounded several projects causing unexpected complication. Delays surfaced with the explosives handling jetty, a facility that permitted British manufactured warheads to be joined with Trident's missiles while aboard the boat, due to additional construction made necessary to meet stringent safety requirements.<sup>24</sup> Another principal site experiencing complication included the NUB, which provided an independent power supply to sustain reactor instrumentation, control and cooling systems while boats sat in berth, and power to the facility in the event of national grid failure.<sup>25</sup> Undoubtedly, the project's numerous suspensions proved to be costly. According to David Corbett, former Project Management Applications Programmer responsible for the Faslane Development Management Reporting System, in order to be ready to support the operational programme for Trident, facilities had to be operational by a fairly rigid deadline. Combine this with, for example, the novel use of Shiplift technology and fairly common civil engineering problems, such as unexpected ground conditions, 'and the time pressures certainly mount'.<sup>26</sup> Consequently, when deadlines became an issue, projects became more expensive and were more prone not to meet original specifications or requirements.

Complications with Faslane's Shiplift were particularly troublesome and deserved undivided attention. Built by Cementation Construction Ltd., this complex, sheltered

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<sup>23</sup> *GH*, 13 June 1991, p. 5.

<sup>24</sup> National Audit Office: Report by the Comptroller General and Auditor General, *Management of the Trident Works Programme*, HC 621 of Session 1993-94, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Second Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 297 of Session 1993-1994, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> Ship Lifts had not been used before to lift a 'dirty' reactor. VSEL used a ship lift, but they only handled new/clean reactors that did not have a decay heat removal problem to deal with.

Correspondence with David Corbett, Project Management Applications Programmer responsible for

apparatus was designed to elevate SSBNs from the Gareloch to provide the necessary system maintenance that the boat's nuclear reactors demanded over the course of their service.<sup>27</sup> The Lift rested on approximately 600 vertical piles and 188 raker piles, which were essentially hollow steel tubes set in concrete sockets and drilled into the Scottish rock. It was this suspension system that presented serious obstacles (Photograph 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8/Illustration 1.1). Problems with the Lift arose when seventy-one raker piles were found defective. By May 1989 half of the defective piles were removed, one-third were replaced and there were ongoing concerns with corrosion.<sup>28</sup> However, by July 1992 the Lift was considered virtually complete and it was handed over to the Ministry of Defence in July 1993, two and a half years past the original completion date. By April 1996 the Lift cost £314 million, £200 million over budget, and when the Royal Navy intended to raise HMS *Vanguard* it first had to receive special permission from the UK Atomic Energy Authority.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, the Shiplift's complications were not atypical amongst the elaborate projects at Trident's shore facilities and its various intricacies merely served as a single example amongst the many that the Property Sales Agency encountered.

Safety, adaptation, poor co-ordination and time restraints all contributed to increased expenditure with the Trident Works Programme. By July 1994 the majority of individual projects had been completed, although permission to operate independently

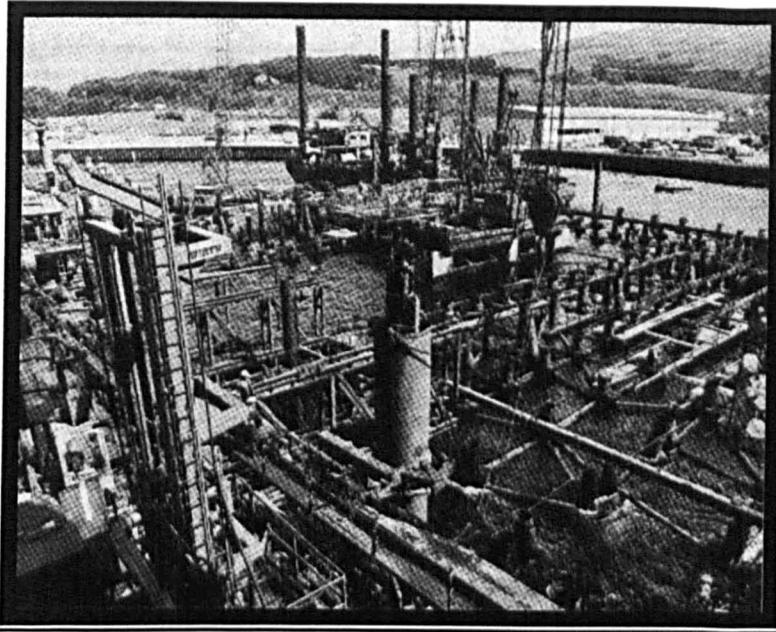
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the Faslane Development Management Reporting System from October 1986 to September 1988 (10/10/03).

<sup>27</sup> W.J. Paterson, R. Dunsire and D.A. Blackburn, 'Design and construction of the Shiplift and Finger Jetty', in F.D.R. Yell (ed.), *Trident facilities: Proceedings of the conference by the Institution of Civil Engineers, held in London 14 April 1994*, (New York: Thomas Telford Books, 1994), p. 99.

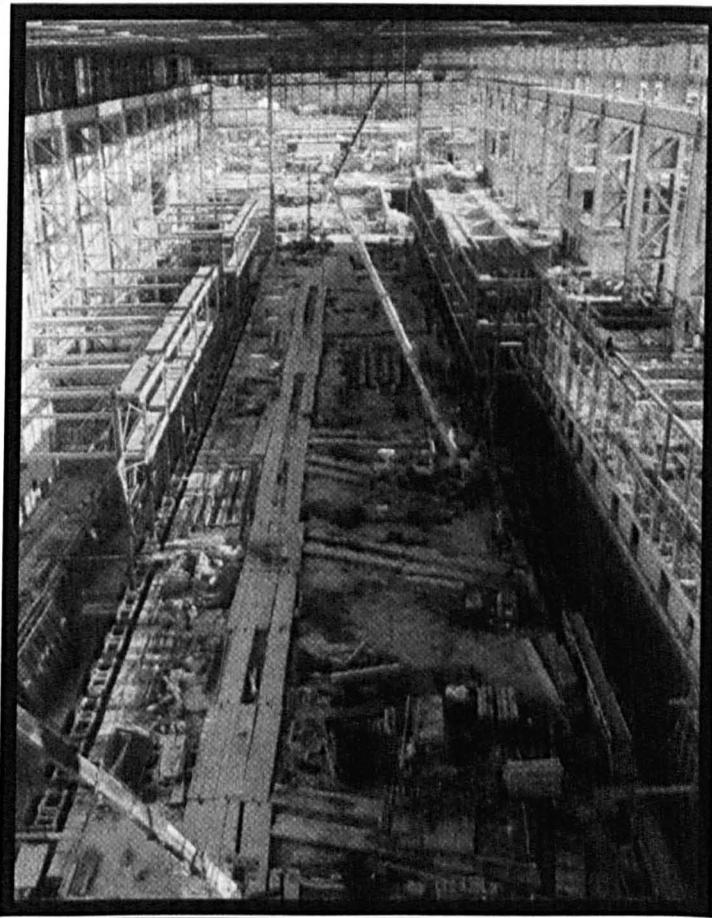
<sup>28</sup> Raker piles were set at an angle and required to take the lateral forces of wind during submarine berthing. Eighth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 286 of Session 1990-91, p. 20; HA, 20 May 1989, p. 5; Fifth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 374 of Session 1988-1989, p. 21; Ninth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 237 of Session 1989-90, p. 19; HA, 11 May 1990, p. 3.

**Photograph 1.5: Faslane Shiplift**



Shiplift piling during installation

**Photograph 1.6: Faslane Shiplift**



Interior view of the Shiplift during the construction phase

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<sup>29</sup> Paterson, Dunsire and Blackburn, *'Design and construction of the Shiplift'*, p. 96.

**Photograph 1.7: Faslane Shiplift**

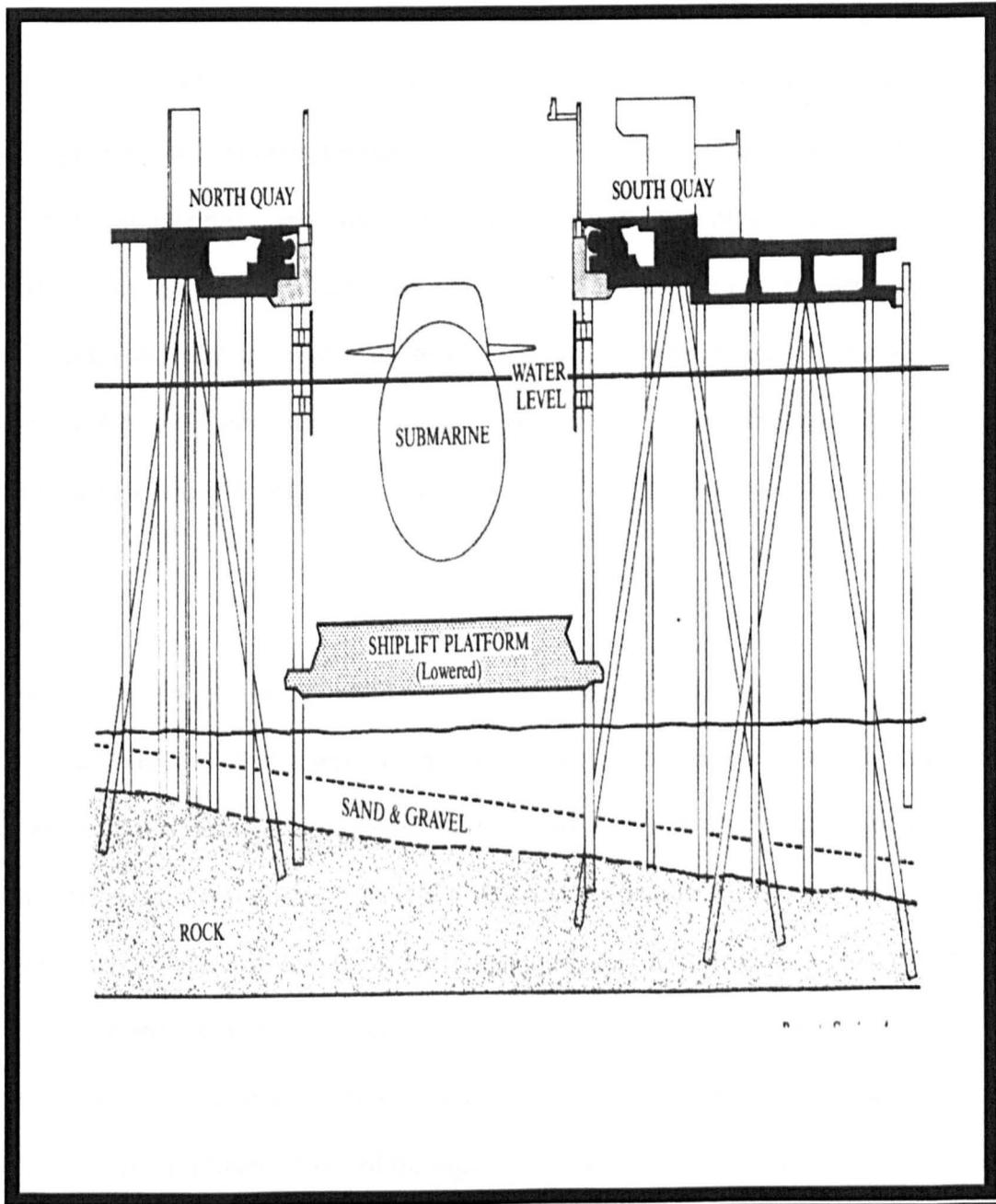


**Photograph 1.8 Faslane Shiplift**



(Above) View from Rosneath peninsula (Below) View from Glenn Fruin bypass

**Illustration 1.1: Faslane Shiplift**



still remained to be given due to rigorous safety standards. Safety case considerations arising from additional projects, and revised Ministry of Defence requirements, also resulted in a number of design and safety alterations after the contract award. One example of these technical revisions involved facilities designed to handle the warheads and missiles on the dockside at Coulport. This consisted of ten separately briefed facilities that included stores, missile handling and support buildings, an integrated security system and the construction of access roads. At considerable cost upgraded facilities were later required to provide the necessary technical, maintenance and control services for Trident submarines. Poor co-ordination of these projects by the Ministry of Defence led to compromised efficiency, which ultimately led to the Programme's added expense and further delay.<sup>30</sup>

Costs for the Programme spiralled out of control. Because of tight timetables contracts were let with designs incomplete and contractors were able to submit claims for extensions of time, delays and disruption costs, many of which were rejected. Other difficulties that ultimately led to disruption and possible exploitation involved contracts that were awarded on the basis of a tender, with the transfer of some work to an incentivised cost reimbursement basis in 1991 eventually requiring careful monitoring of the contractor's labour productivity. Mounting costs to the British taxpayer were ultimately justified through the highest of safety standards, though the quality of guidance provided by the Ministry of Defence, and inadequate design, inevitably produced governmental waste. Furthermore, consistent pressure to finish construction as quickly as possible led to numerous safety delays and cost overruns,

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<sup>30</sup> National Audit Office: Report by the Comptroller General and Auditor General, *Management of the Trident Works Programme*, HC 621 of Session 1993-94. See in its entirety.

resulting in massive tax expenditure.<sup>31</sup> The Trident Works Programme had cost £1.92 billion at 1994 prices, 72 per cent more in real terms than originally expected, with a case-study by the Central Unit for Procurement criticising the Ministry for its ‘mismanagement on a grand scale’ after the cost of new facilities grew by an astounding £800 million.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the development of Polaris the performance of the Trident Works Programme, though successful in its completion, was handled in such a way that it left much to be desired (**Photograph 1.9, 1.10**).<sup>33</sup>

### **General responses to Trident within the Strathclyde Region**

Despite the covert nature of SSBN operations, residents of Dumbarton, Dunoon, Glasgow and Greenock regularly witnessed the national deterrent’s comings and goings while the community of Helensburgh sheltered thousands of Royal Navy personnel. It should be noted that unlike Portsmouth, Plymouth or Rosyth, Helensburgh was not regarded as a traditional naval town though the Royal Navy was a part of the Clyde community. After 1945, Helensburgh maintained an intimate relationship with both the Royal Navy and the Ministry of Defence as a significant proportion of its residents was linked to either Coulport or Faslane in some capacity. In March 1996 Faslane accommodated 2,337 servicemen at the base, with 228 of that figure being officers.<sup>34</sup> This figure did not represent the numerous military personnel that integrated into surrounding communities and maintained residence over the

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<sup>31</sup> NAO, HC 621 of Session 93-94.

<sup>32</sup> Central Unit for Procurement, *The Trident Works Programme: A Case Study* (CUP Guidance: 1995), p. 3; *TTG*, 6 July 1995, p. 2; *HA*, 20 May 1994, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> At that time Defence Secretary, Dennis Healy, stated that the Polaris programme would not proceed with a fifth boat as the decision saved about £45 million in capital costs. Such savings allowed central government to resume the nuclear propelled hunter-killer programme and the overall timetable for Polaris was kept. J. Ring, *We Come Unseen: The Untold Story of the Britain’s Cold War Submariners* (London: John Murray, 2001), p. 59.

<sup>34</sup> *Navy Accommodation*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 274 Col 634, 27 March 1996.

**Photograph 1.9: Clyde Submarine Base**



**Photograph 1.10: Clyde Submarine Base**



(Top) Aerial view of Faslane (Below) View from Glen Fruin Bypass.

course of thirty years. Furthermore, the relationship between community and shore facilities was highlighted by the *Helensburgh Advertiser*, which habitually featured articles pertaining to the activities of military residents or the Royal Navy itself. Articles such as 'Officers tender care', a feature with a photo of an officer and his model trains, or 'New crest for sub squadron', honouring the 10th Submarine Squadron, made for frequent reading.<sup>35</sup> It is a certainty that many in Helensburgh prided themselves on hosting the UK's nuclear deterrent, an attribute best demonstrated when the community council intended to include Trident expansion plans in their 1986 'Historic Helensburgh' exhibition.<sup>36</sup> However, this unique relationship was made most apparent through the Faslane Fair. Since 1988 this naval celebration consistently reinforced the Royal Navy's relationship with Helensburgh's civilians through numerous exhibits, amusements and presentations.<sup>37</sup> Yet despite the area's general enthusiasm for Trident, there were those who were uncomfortable with the SSBN

In the summer of 1992 a deliberate exercise to preserve the relationship between the SSBN, the Royal Navy and the Helensburgh community was conducted when the local paper released the sixteen-page promotional document, *Faslane Features*. Issued just previous to the introduction of the first Trident boat, HMS *Vanguard*, the true intent of this document was to prepare civilians for its arrival and confirm to the general public that every possible safety precaution was firmly in place. Articles such as 'Always safety first: how Faslane monitors radiation and is monitored itself' were strategically positioned to accentuate the numerous safety elements of the

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<sup>35</sup> *HA*, 2 September 1983, p. 7; *HA*, 6 November 1992, p. 8

<sup>36</sup> The Ministry of Defence did not permit this. *HA*, 25 July 1986, p. 2.

<sup>37</sup> *HA*, 20 May 1988, p. 1; *HA*, 17 June 1988, p. 3; *HA*, 30 May 1996, p. 9.

programme.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, it skilfully shifted focus from the nuclear aspect of Trident by concluding with the human dimension as articles like ‘Loneliness of the long distance wives’ and ‘Working together: there at the berth!’ reminded civilians that submariners served a specific military function but were also family-orientated.<sup>39</sup> Though Jonathan Aitken, then Defence Procurement Minister at Faslane, wilfully disregarded the Programme’s £800 million overspend and hailed Trident as an ‘industrial success story’, responses from communities outside Helensburgh were less favourable but varied over time.<sup>40</sup>

While the disarmament movement’s response to Trident in Scotland was categorical, especially from activists who resided within Strathclyde, the reactions of communities outside Helensburgh were varied, with local media only able to provide the most general of interpretations.<sup>41</sup> After the decision to implement Trident in July 1980, the *Helensburgh Advertiser’s* transparent headline declared, ‘The future of the Base is secure’, with this renewed sense of confidence attributed to sustained employment. Yet it should be noted that the potential for job creation was an incentive for greater Scottish cooperation with the project. Central government’s decision to implement this strategic programme was based purely on security interests as the Soviet Union’s occupation of Afghanistan at that time verified Trident’s applicability.<sup>42</sup> Stewart Noble, former Chairman of Helensburgh Community Council, stated:

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<sup>38</sup> *Faslane Features*, summer 1992, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *Faslane Features*, summer 1992, p. 12, 15.

<sup>40</sup> *HA*, 9 October 1992, p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> It should be noted that newspapers have an editorial opinion that may not concur with the views of their respective communities. See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement.

<sup>42</sup> A. Dobrynin, *In Confidence: Moscow’s Ambassador to America’s Six Cold War Presidents* (New York: Times Books, 1995), p. 440.

I think it goes without saying that everyone in Helensburgh (not just the community council) believes that Trident offers considerable employment to the area. Some have argued that its presence has deterred employers, but I would tend to suspect that the net effect must have been to provide considerable employment.<sup>43</sup>

On economic grounds the *Greenock Telegraph* also exhibited interest in Trident when it asked, 'Will submarine orders surface for Scotts?'<sup>44</sup> In 1916 Scotts of Greenock completed HMS *Swordfish*, the first steam submarine for the Royal Navy, and later performed refit work on the conventional Oberon class.<sup>45</sup> Despite its experience with submarines, the yard's aspirations failed to materialise as Vickers Shipbuilding and Engineering Limited (VSEL) in Barrow-in-Furness was selected to construct the Vanguard class.<sup>46</sup> Yet various sections of these, and other communities, supported the decision to strengthen national security through Trident. However, editorial opinions that read 'No Christian should support nuclear war' and 'Scrap Trident and give us peace' also appeared within the pages of Dumbarton's *Lennox Herald*, indicative of the tensions within the region.<sup>47</sup>

From 1980-1985 the acquisition of Trident pressurised the Strathclyde Region, with the system's frequently advertised yet speculative economic benefits, and its effectiveness as a deterrent, not universally accepted. Regardless of the level of employment the system was thought to provide, the decision to upgrade Trident in March 1982 encouraged the *Lennox Herald* to proclaim a 'Fury over Trident II purchase'. A *Glasgow Herald* headline at that time also advertised that the 'Trident

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<sup>43</sup> Correspondence with Stewart Noble, Chairman of Helensburgh Community Council 1992-1995, (07/10/02).

<sup>44</sup> *HA*, 18 July 1980, p. 1; *GT*, 22 July 1980, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> D.M. Fraser, *Scottish Disasters* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1996), p. 64.

<sup>46</sup> By 1990 Scott-Lithgow was finished.

<sup>47</sup> *LH*, 12 March 1982, p. 3; *LH*, 26 February 1982, p. 5; *LH*, 15 August 1980, p. 4.

system is off target'.<sup>48</sup> Clashing headlines proliferated within regional papers as the Strathclyde territory harboured both champions of the system and advocates for disarmament. However, Trident was an issue capable of transcending either personal religious convictions or political allegiances, a characteristic that ultimately fuelled the intensity of this debate. While the Labour Party supported disarmament up until 1989, Catholic assimilation into Scottish society, 'the increasing orientation of adherents' towards Labour since the early 1900s, and their numerical presence in the industrial west did not prevent 79.7 per cent of the electorate in lochside wards from voting against the party 'and their policies on Trident'.<sup>49</sup> This was in 1984, at the height of opposition to Trident in Scotland. However, this is not to say that the system was well received as an unspecified number of residents also believed Trident was an act of futility. While the Royal Navy's participation in the Falklands campaign generally muted anti-Trident sentiment nearer to Helensburgh, there were a number of those who defied the logic of deterrence and noted that British possession of Polaris failed to repel the Argentinians in 1982.<sup>50</sup> Regardless, it would be misleading to suggest that there were levels of opposition to Trident comparable with Scottish reactions to the arrival of the US Polaris fleet in 1961.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *LH*, 12 March 1982, p.1; *GH*, 12 March 1982, p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Strathclyde was home to the largest percentage of Scotland's Catholic community. *HA*, 1 June 1984, p. 4. I. Maver, 'The Catholic Community', in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.) *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), p. 274.

<sup>50</sup> This was a topic of discussion in an interview with Iain Leitch. American possession of Trident also did not deter Al Qaeda in September 2001. Interview with Iain Leitch, former Labour representative for Dumbarton North, Dumbarton District Council (19/11/02).

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement.

If we fast-forward to 1992 the Trident Works Programme was approaching completion with the Vanguard class sailing into the Gareloch unimpeded. Arguments against the system were very much contained. The Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986 failed to inspire resistance to Trident in Scotland, the Soviet Union fell defunct, and the project was no longer a viable political issue, though the disarmament and Christian peace movements struggled to preserve interest in the issue.<sup>52</sup> With the October 1992 arrival of HMS *Vanguard*, the *Helensburgh Advertiser* sustained its usual demeanour when it exclaimed, 'A leviathan comes home to Faslane' and 'Hundreds wait to see history made'.<sup>53</sup> *The Dunoon Observer and Argyllshire Standard*, apparently unimpressed, placed this introduction on page eight and simply described it as 'the largest submarine ever commissioned by the Royal Navy.'<sup>54</sup> Much of Dunoon's indifference to this event was derived from the community's geographical remoteness, with Trident-based employment having little influence over the area. However, twelve years after Scotts dockyard was denied the contract for Trident the *Greenock Telegraph* lost its enthusiastic tone by announcing that *Vanguard* arrived to 'her new home at Faslane on the Clyde...amid angry protests from angry protesters'.<sup>55</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* headline, also concentrating on objection, further announced that 'Anti-Trident protesters brushed aside at Faslane'.<sup>56</sup> Though defiance is accentuated this cryptic headline proved misleading as few members of the disarmament movement actually challenged its arrival. The

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<sup>52</sup> The Chernobyl disaster occurred 2,500 kilometres away but it is still contaminating Scottish sheep with levels of radioactivity considered unsafe to eat. After the nuclear reactor at Chernobyl in the Ukraine exploded and spewed radioactivity over most of Europe in April 1986, people were assured by the authorities that its effects would be seen off in a matter of weeks. This had considerable impact on public opinion and the issue was allowed to rest. In 2004 fourteen farms covering 16,300 hectares of southwest and central Scotland are still subject to restrictions on the movement and slaughter of radioactive sheep. *SH*, May 22, 2004, p.4.

<sup>53</sup> *HA*, 30 October 1992, pp. 30-31.

<sup>54</sup> *Dunoon Observer and Argyllshire Standard*, 31 October 1992, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup> *GT*, 26 October 1992, p. 1

weakened state of protest that coincided with the arrival of this first boat proved to set the standard. As the remaining Vanguard class SSBNs moved into Faslane, it seems that the intensity of this issue was successfully contained. Pre-conditioned through Polaris, Strathclyde residents had grown accustomed to the presence of the national deterrent.

With the final three boats set to arrive by the end of the millennium, the public's interest in Trident plummeted throughout the region due in no small part to the collapse of the former Soviet Union and the restoration of the Scottish Parliament. By 1994 the US Navy was on the verge of receiving its sixteenth Ohio class Trident SSBN. Therefore, in the opinion of the Ministry of Defence the May introduction of HMS *Victorious*, the second of the Royal Navy's Vanguard class, must have appeared as anything but excessive.<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, when HMS *Vigilant*, the UK's third boat, entered Faslane in March 1996 a significant proportion of the Scottish media still retained its focus on protest.<sup>58</sup> Though this had little influence over Scottish civil society, it did make clear that a lingering element of antagonism still remained both regionally and throughout Scotland. However, though certain sections of the national media attempted to rekindle interest by May 1999 concern with HMS *Vengeance*, and the Trident issue overall, was superseded by Labour's delivery of greater autonomy.<sup>59</sup> Despite the efforts of the *Sunday Herald* to inspire a reaction, thus sending a unilateralist memorandum to Westminster, Scots opted to employ Scottish parliamentary elections as a mechanism that would improve their everyday living.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> *GH*, 26 October 1992, p. 2; *LH*, 30 October 1992, p. 10-11.

<sup>57</sup> Hutchinson, *Submarines War Beneath the Waves*, p. 178.

<sup>58</sup> *TS*, 20 March 1996, p. 1; *HA*, 21 March 1996, p. 1.

<sup>59</sup> See Chapter Four: Civil Society and Public Opinion.

<sup>60</sup> *SH*, 25 April 1999, p. 3; *SH*, 21 February 1999, p. 2. Also see Chapter Three: The Scottish political dimension of Trident.

Defence was generally considered irrelevant. Tucked away into the back of the Scottish psyche, Trident was permitted to remain in relative peace.

### **Environment, Safety and Trident**

With the procurement, construction and operation of any complex weapon system came a long list of safety concerns for both the governments that employed these weapons and those communities within close proximity. Therefore, both the Trident Works Programme and the day-to-day operation of the SSBN and SLBM naturally coincided with Scottish concerns over environmental and public health issues. In environmental terms, Trident's presence within the Strathclyde Region initially brought several inflammatory developments. In the interests of both security and operational preparedness, seemingly endless lines of security fences, penetrating observation towers, extensive geo-physical alterations to the surrounding landscape and waterways, unsightly support facilities and frequent construction traffic made for perpetual criticism (**Photograph 1.11, 1.12, 1.13, 1.14**). In terms of public risk, the nuclear dimension of Trident brought with it considerations regarding Soviet targeting, ecological devastation, radiological contamination and fears of an accidental detonation involving a Trident warhead on site. All these issues were of significant concern to local authorities regardless of probability.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> It must be understood that specifics on safety practices during service operations for Trident were not intended for public consumption and much of the information in this section is based on what is presently available to the public domain.

**Photograph 1.11: Coulport Construction**



**Photograph 1.12: Faslane Perimeter Fence**



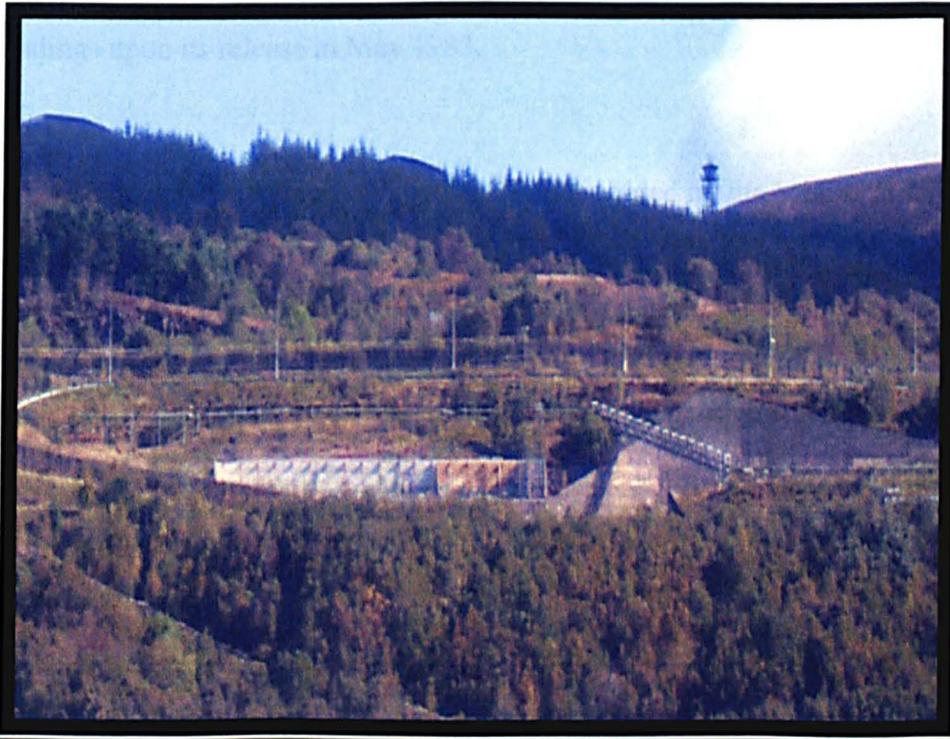
Behind the security fence are several rows of razor wire, with a centred walkway for security patrols with dogs. Numerous security cameras and infrared sensors also insure the integrity of the perimeter fence.

**Photograph 1.13: Coulport Observation Tower**



Numerous observation towers are strategically set across the grounds of the Coulport facility

**Photograph 1.14: Coulport Ancillary Hardstanding**



It is believed Trident's powerful warheads are stored inside this structure.

When submitting planning applications for the system poor decisions by the Ministry of Defence did little, if anything, to inspire cooperation from local councils. Indicative of the Ministry's obvious concerns with national security and completing the Programme as timely as possible environmental and operational safety took highest priority. However, local authorities believed the June 1981 Notice of Proposed Development failed to provide a suitable environmental impact assessment.<sup>62</sup> Tight restrictions on information by the Ministry of Defence therefore sparked an unfavourable reaction from the Labour-controlled Dumbarton District Council, and although there was a clear political element to the council's dissatisfaction, it was missile servicing and the frequent handling of hazardous materials at Coulport that worried them most. After consultations with Strathclyde Regional Council, serious efforts were made by both councils to conduct a special inquiry regarding the system's installation on the Clyde. Though it was designed to encapsulate all the concerns both councils had with Trident, the Inquiry brought few new findings upon its release in May 1983.

Incomplete proposals and patchwork information provided by the Ministry of Defence did nothing to bolster either Trident's popularity or the findings of the Coulport Inquiry. Due to Crown exemption, the Inquiry explained that the Ministry of Defence was not legally required to provide an environmental impact assessment for Trident and did so only of its own will.<sup>63</sup> The Ministry's reasons for such vagueness were

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<sup>62</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Notice of Proposed Development*, 2 June 1981.

<sup>63</sup> The document noted that although central government encouraged the use of environmental impact assessments since 1972, they were not mandatory. However, according to the Health and Safety statute it was the responsibility of employers to notify the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) if they handled certain specified hazardous materials, with nuclear sites and military installations subject to HSE notification procedures. The European Commission's Directive 'on the major accident hazards of certain industrial activities' also made it mandatory for the UK to introduce hazard surveys into their statute, but this would not take effect until sometime in 1989. Though Strathclyde Regional Council requested the Ministry of Defence to meet with the Council's consultants in January 1983 to discuss

attributed to the magnitude of the project because the start date was years ahead of its completion date; there were matters of national security along with incomplete site surveys; and it claimed that it wanted to take into account the views of local councils for their environmental planning matters. There are several examples of this obscurity. Plans provided by the Ministry of Defence did not specify the location of submarine berthing facilities, but did indicate that that they would be within a kilometre of the existing berthage. The number and exact locations of installations handling missiles and warheads at Coulport also remained undetermined, with a consideration in the detailed site planning required to maintain safeguarding distances between certain buildings in order to reduce damage from accidental non-nuclear explosions (**Photograph 1.15, 1.16**). Finally, along with navigational and airspace restrictions in the vicinity of Coulport and Faslane, the details of Coulport's safeguarding map involving yellow safety lines could not be provided to the public without permission from the Ministry.<sup>64</sup> With the project shrouded in secrecy, Strathclyde Regional Council's research was compromised from the very beginning.

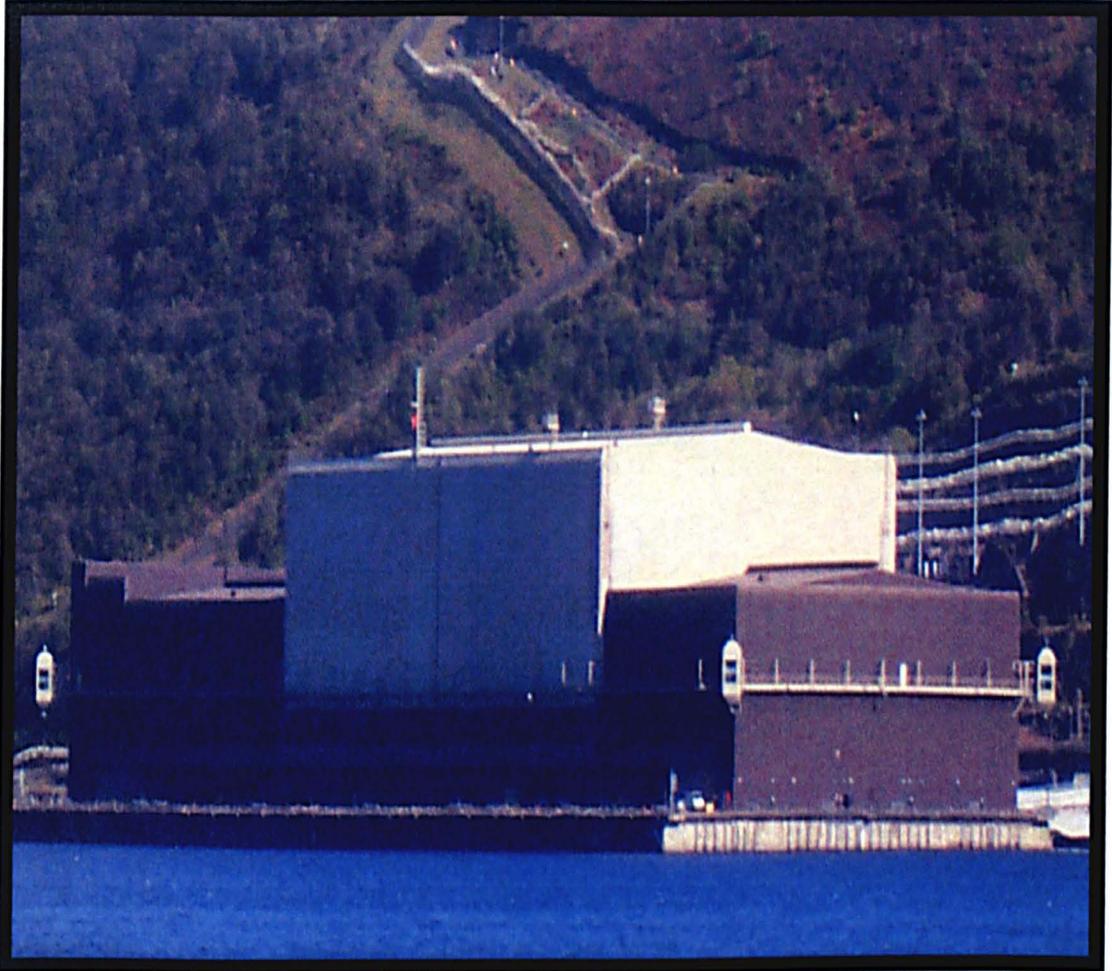
Because of restrictions applied to classified information, theoretical arguments both for and against the system did little to strengthen the credibility of the Inquiry despite contributions from specialists. The council appointed the firm Cremer and Warner in December 1982 as consultants on the issues of accidental and war induced hazards.

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technical data associated with Coulport's hazard analysis and risk assessment, the Ministry would not agree to such a discussion. JT Strathclyde Regional Council, *An Environmental Impact Assessment of the Proposed Extension of the Royal Naval Armament Depot, Coulport for the purposes of the Trident Weapon System, Part One: General Report* (HDB Torrance ARIBA ARIAS FRTPI Director of Physical Planning, May 1983), p. 1-10. A copy of this is also available at the Mitchell Library.

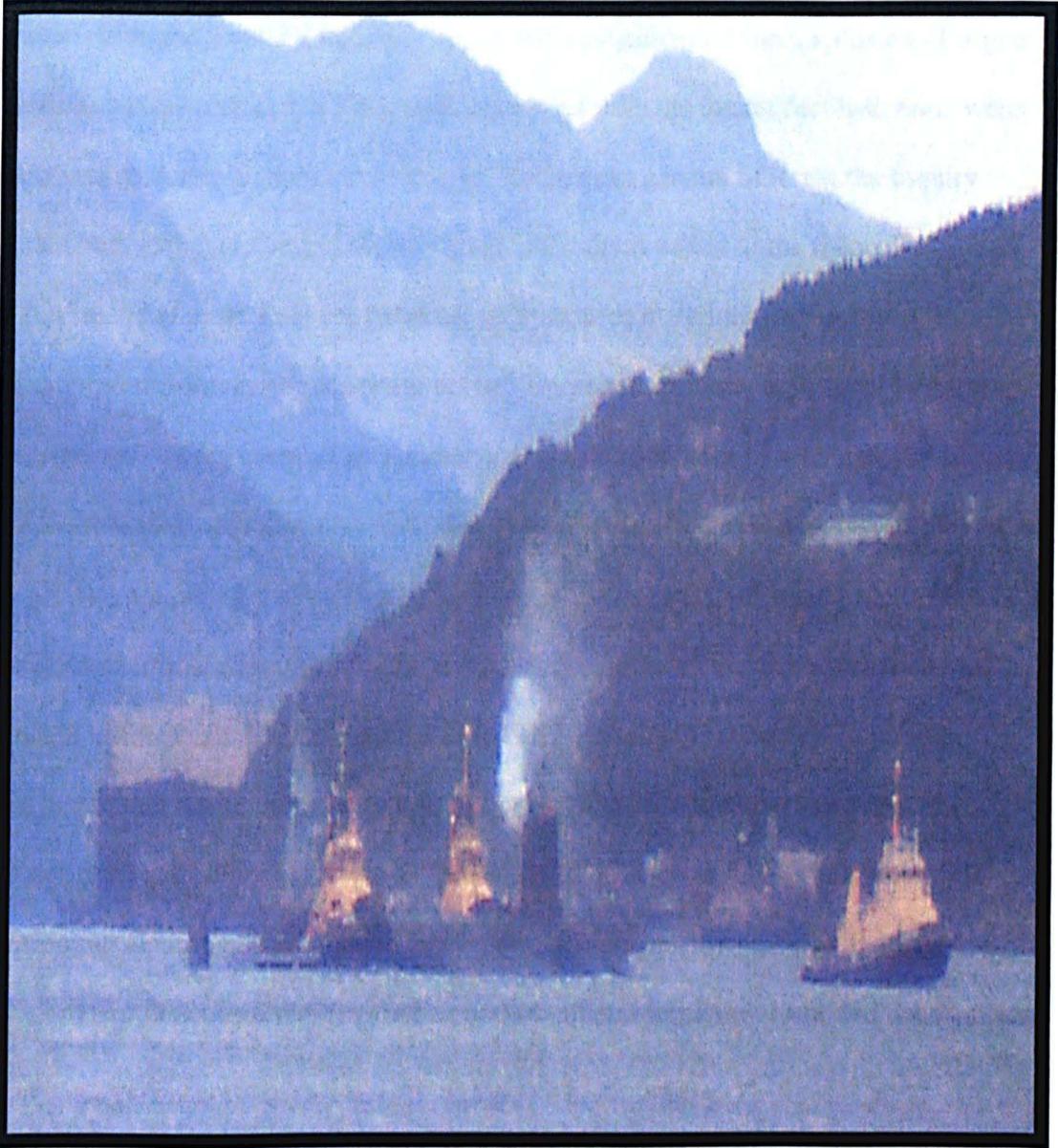
<sup>64</sup> The proposal emphasised that Coulport was subject to the Town and Country Planning Act which required the Ministry to be consulted about the development of a clear safety distance in the event of accidental non-nuclear explosion, referred to as a yellow line. Until consultations on these lines had been completed, local government considered the document incomplete. However, it was eventually determined that yellow safety lines could not be published as this information potentially revealed the location of certain classified materials to adversaries through complex mathematical formulae.

**Photograph 1.15: RNAD Coulport**



The Coulport facility rests upon Loch Long

**Photograph 1.16: Trident SSBN at Coulport**



Final destination unknown (2004): A Trident SSBN departs from the Coulport facility (background).

Specific hazards that could be introduced into the Strathclyde territory, or pre-existing hazards that could be increased following the introduction of Trident, were also addressed. Peacetime safety considerations included the potential for risk to local population not only from Coulport itself but also from the transport of toxic materials to and from the facility. Topics such as accidental fire, explosion of trigger devices within warheads and dangers associated with the rocket fuel hydrazine were also included in this analysis. However, in the most general of terms the Inquiry could only estimate that missile servicing at Coulport added to the risks of accidents 'if' it involved more frequent handling of hazardous materials, or if any test firing of missile propulsion systems were to occur. These assumptions were hardly unexpected. In the event of an accidental explosion involving a warhead, the Inquiry also emphasised that anyone within twenty-one kilometres downwind of an accidental explosion not taking well-protected shelter within the first hour would likely receive fatal doses of radiation. Due to Trident's assumed capabilities this also failed to remain unforeseen. Finally, as accepted with Polaris the first half of the Inquiry suggested that numerous accidents could occur while the missiles were aboard submarines and believed there were also risks of damage to submarines from collision with other shipping or grounding.<sup>65</sup> Bound by the concealment of information, to a large extent the consultant's engineers and scientists simply reinterpreted the obvious.

Continuing with its hypothetical analysis, the second half of the Coulport Inquiry provided a most interesting *War-Induced Hazards Assessment*, which envisioned a scenario involving a nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union. The findings of the

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<sup>65</sup> The chances of these incidents actually occurring were described as remote by the Strathclyde Inquiry. See: *JT An Environmental Impact Assessment of the Proposed Extension of the Royal Naval Armament Depot, Coulport for the purposes of the Trident Weapon System, Part Two: Scientific Report*

Inquiry concerning attack patterns against the Strathclyde territory were heavily influenced by the 1980 UK Government Exercise 'Square Leg', with the exercise suggesting that an initial attack would involve roughly a dozen warheads with a total yield of some 16 megatons.<sup>66</sup> Estimations further dictated that the reliability of Soviet warheads was roughly 70 per cent, with 30 per cent of those weapons failing to explode on or near their targets. Targets in Strathclyde were therefore believed to be covered up to three times, increasing the probability of a successful strike. If only nuclear installations in Strathclyde were attacked then estimated civilian casualties due to burns and blast would be roughly 30,000 deaths and 100,000 injuries, but the radioactive fallout could have caused hundreds of thousands of other fatalities. If the attack included targets within the Glasgow conurbation then the casualties would have been very heavy whether or not the installations were also targets.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, while the contents of this analysis made for an interesting read, such findings generally stated what was already to be assumed. Taking great care so as not to leak information and thus provide ammunition to either Strathclyde Regional Council or its consultants, the Ministry of Defence maintained secrecy but also, arguably, sabotaged the Coulport Inquiry. However, the inconclusive nature of this study certainly did not condemn Trident, thus providing for a meaningless document that effectively neutralised the objectives of local authorities.

The Trident system had been upgraded and underwent modifications in 1982, and in the wake of the failed Coulport Inquiry it could be presumed that both the Ministry of

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*on Hazard*, (HDB Torrance ARIBA ARIAS FRTPI Director of Physical Planning, May 1983), in its entirety. This is also available at the Mitchell Library.

<sup>66</sup> Strathclyde was considered a likely target for Soviet military planners as it was home to nuclear installations at Coulport, Faslane, the US Polaris fleet at the Holy Loch and NATO Armaments Depot, Glen Douglas.

<sup>67</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, *Part Two: Scientific Report on Hazard*, p.5-2, 5-3.

Defence and the Property Sales Agency attempted to improve relations with local government. In May 1984 the Ministry issued a revised Notice of Proposed Development that included a rich assortment of analysis, charts, graphs and maps which estimated the impact of shore facilities on the surrounding area.<sup>68</sup> However, because national security supported the utilisation of selective materials, Dumbarton District Council was again left unsatisfied. In January 1985 Labour councillors expressed fears that earthquakes posed an unacceptable threat to the 160ft high Ship Lift, though a British Geological Survey believed that the risk of earthquake damage was negligible.<sup>69</sup> Local councillors also criticised the proposed perimeter fence surrounding the expanded facility and pushed for the construction of escape routes from Coulport and Faslane.<sup>70</sup> For Scottish historians, this subject also proved to be of interest. In the event of either an incoming strike or some tragic accident, a rapid departure from the vicinity appeared unlikely, with only main motorways such as the A814 and A817 readily available and flowing directly into the A82 near Dumbarton (Map 1.2). With tens of thousands of vehicles fleeing the scene, according to Iain Leitch, former Labour councillor for Dumbarton North, traffic would ultimately bottleneck near Dumbarton with the 'walking dead' cordoning off all emergency service vehicles into the area.<sup>71</sup> Yet the construction of additional motorways from these sites was determined to be unnecessary and in February 1985 the Ministry of Defence selectively responded to various criticisms by arguing that Polaris never

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<sup>68</sup> Ministry of Defence and the Property Sales Agency, *Proposed Development at the Clyde Submarine Base Faslane and Coulport: Environmental Impact Assessment* (May 1984).

<sup>69</sup> *GH*, 21 January 1985, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> *LH*, 1 February 1985, p. 14, 15.

<sup>71</sup> In event of a nuclear accident/strike, a much longer route of escape along the A811 through Stirling would have been available, but time consuming. In such an incident Leitch also indicated that limited motorway access was beneficial to control unwanted media. Several emergency situations were also discussed. During conventional warfare, emergency service vehicles stay within the area to assist the wounded and fight fires. In the event of a nuclear strike, emergency service vehicles are evacuated from the area if possible, then return after detonation to assist. During a nuclear strike, emergency

**Map 1.2: Motorways from Coulport and Faslane**



service vehicles near Faslane would have been trapped with those residents fleeing the area due to limited access. Interview with Leitch (19/11/02).

experienced an accidental explosion, and that security fences were necessary for the restricted areas surrounding Trident facilities.<sup>72</sup> Legitimate questions still required detailed response but the Ministry was incapable of assisting Dumbarton District Council in their quest for greater information.

After Younger approved the planning application for the Trident Works Programme in March 1985, the decision allowed for a majority of the system's opposition to collapse. Though asbestos ground-contamination appeared within two months it posed little threat to Trident's progress. Massive quantities of blue, white and brown asbestos had been discovered in the repossessed shipbreaking yard at Faslane, and according to Dumbarton's Alternative Employment Study Group (AESG), the Ministry concealed this discovery until the planning application was outwith the limited remit of Dumbarton District.<sup>73</sup> Complications ensued. Designated to be removed and transported to Glenboig, after a heated response from the local community the Ministry reconsidered and decided in June that the asbestos should be placed in special container bags then disposed of in Lanarkshire.<sup>74</sup> However, during a presentation for Dumbarton District Council, Les Robertson, Labour councillor for Bonhill East and Convenor of Environmental Health, demonstrated the ease with which asbestos could have been released into the environment after he punctured a sample bag with a common household spoon.<sup>75</sup> At a national level interest was mute,

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<sup>72</sup> *HA*, 15 February 1985, p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> This was according to: DL The Alternative Employment Study Group, *Polaris and Trident: The Myths and Realities of Employment* (1985), p. 14; *HA*, 3 May 1985, p. 1.

<sup>74</sup> *Asbestos and Toxic substances*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 80 Col 879, 12 June 1985.

<sup>75</sup> Correspondence with Les Robertson, former Labour Councillor and Convenor of Environmental Health (30/10/02). During the course of this research a letter from North Lanarkshire Council read, 'Factual details on the transfer of waste from an MOD establishment would be very much restricted, preventing any public official from commenting on it.' Received: (31/10/02).

and regionally, the situation only slightly intensified when a greater amount of asbestos 'than was first envisaged' was to be removed from site in March 1986.<sup>76</sup>

In its attempts to defuse the situation the Ministry decided that contaminated dredged materials could be dumped off at Cloch Point. Yet this proposal was also rejected when it was revealed that contaminated soil dumped either in or near the Clyde could foster both an environmental and public hazard.<sup>77</sup> According to Robertson, the Ministry's final solution involved asbestos being encapsulated in glass globules, enclosing the material in sheet-piled walls and covering it with reinforced concrete with the removal of this hazardous material costing an estimated £8 million.<sup>78</sup> Because the intensity of the Trident debate in Scotland had receded to such a large extent, little was actually made of these events at that time.

Anatoly Dobrynin, Moscow's ambassador to six US Presidents during the Cold War era, has acknowledged that the November 1985 Geneva Summit may be regarded as 'the beginning of the end of the Cold War', but by December 1986 central government would have considered the suspension of Trident's progress as irresponsible.<sup>79</sup> The project moved forward. In Scotland, noise levels during Trident's construction phase proved to be greater than predicted, miles of security fences were required for adequate security and a bypass would be constructed at Glen Fruin. The Ministry of Defence understood that noise disrupted life near Helensburgh with an

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<sup>76</sup> By April 1986 it was confirmed that the Gareloch was contaminated from battleships dumped by Metal Industries. *HA*, 7 March 1986, p. 3.

<sup>77</sup> *GT*, 14 April 1986, p. 5.

<sup>78</sup> Robertson explained that the Secretary of State for Scotland, Michael Forsyth, refused to make £100,000 available for asbestos removal in council housing. There 'was no extra money to make houses safe for people, but plenty of additional money to make Faslane safe for Trident'.

<sup>79</sup> Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 564.

insulation scheme and offers to purchase homes near Faslane extended to residents.<sup>80</sup> However, it is apparent that security measures had a far greater impact upon the surrounding countryside. By February 1986 Strathclyde Regional Council informed the Ministry that it would need consent to renew a perimeter fence outside Faslane under the terms of the Roads (Scotland) Act 1984.<sup>81</sup> Disregarding Strathclyde's warnings, a 7.5 metre high fence with thirty-five closed circuit television system towers and infrared illuminators was erected without council approval.<sup>82</sup> Finally, in December 1986 local authorities believed the construction of the Glenn Fruin bypass posed credible risks to both Scotland's natural heritage and national security as the road permitted public access to within a relatively few metres of the Coulport facility.<sup>83</sup> Two years earlier the Irish Republican Army's (IRA) attack on the Grand Hotel in Brighton nearly wiped out the Thatcher government, with councillors highlighting accessibility to a facility that housed the system's powerful warheads.<sup>84</sup> It appears that these specific concerns were considered to be unfounded as the Ministry of Defence disregarded these observations and pushed forward to complete the project against a specific deadline, and potentially, international developments.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Sellers would be able to repurchase their homes at market's value when noise levels fell. *Faslane Construction Work*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 89 Col 97, 16 December 1985.

<sup>81</sup> *GH*, 17 December 1985, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> There was also a 'clear zone' with vegetation removed from a ten metre wide strip inside the fence that extended into the Gareloch, with three extra coils of barbed wire placed inside and at the bottom of the fences. The purpose of this cleared zone was for patrols with dogs around the perimeter of Faslane. Property Sales Agency, *Notice of Proposed Development: RNAD Coulport Depot Perimeter Fence Upgrade*, (PSA Directorate of Defence Services II, 1986), p. 17. *HA*, 1 February 1986, p. 5; *HA*, 21 March 1986, p. 7; *LH*, 11 April 1986, p. 16.

<sup>83</sup> *GH*, 10 December 1986, p. 3; *HA*, 11 April 1986, p. 1; *HA*, 11 July 1986, p. 5.

<sup>84</sup> T. Geraghty, *The Irish War: the military history of a domestic conflict* ((London: Harper Collins, 2000), p. 211; Interview with Leitch (19/11/02).

<sup>85</sup> During the Reykjavik summit Gorbachev proposed a comprehensive set of reductions for strategic arms, intermediate-range missiles and space weapons. He even proposed to eliminate all strategic nuclear weapons within a decade. This may have inspired the UK Government to complete the programme as soon as possible. Isaacs and Downing, *The Cold War*, p. 366.

In February 1989 it became evident that the Trident Works Programme was a project of such enormity that it had the capacity to alter Scottish waterways. The Ministry of Defence's proposal concerning the widening of Rhu Narrows intended to remove the landmark on the Gareloch, Rhu Spit, though three years earlier it had pledged the area would be left intact.<sup>86</sup> The reason for removing land that ran out into the water was both to widen and deepen Rhu Narrows for the massive 16,000 tonne, 150 metre boat. For this objective to be achieved, considerable drilling, blasting and dredging was required, with approximately one-third (140m) of the length of Rhu Spit removed. Two million cubic metres of material was to be dredged from the Narrows though some environmentalists suspected that this measure would increase the turbidity of water, creating high noise pollution levels and possibly disturbing fish breeding grounds.<sup>87</sup> The plan also involved the straightening of a bend in the Narrows at Kidston Park to provide better steerage for submarines.<sup>88</sup> By January 1990 contractors blasted away the landmark at the end of the Spit, and from seven to seven, seven days a week for nine months the dredger worked the loch until it cleared the channel.<sup>89</sup>

During the final days of this hugely expensive project three issues in particular deserved closer attention. The environmental impact of Coulport was most unfavourably described by a Blairmore resident when it was stated that:

It presented a large scar on the landscape of Loch Long. Since that time the scarring [along the shore] has healed slightly as a result of vegetation re-establishing itself on the bare rock and concrete. At Ardentinny you

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<sup>86</sup> HA, 10 March 1989, p. 1.

<sup>87</sup> A small rock outcrop in Rosneath Bay was also to be removed by drilling and blasting. Property Services Agency, *Clyde Submarine Base at Faslane: Widening of Rhu Narrows* (Description of Works and Environmental Assessment, February 1989), p. 8.1.

<sup>88</sup> HA, 7 April 1989, p. 3.

<sup>89</sup> HA, 26 January 1990, p. 1.

cannot escape from the rape of the landscape... We do worry about accidents but you put it in the back of your mind and get on with life'.<sup>90</sup>

Despite a clean environmental record backed by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), these comments indicated that Coulport brought with it a lingering psychological impact. Yet it should be recognised that those in proximity to the facility were able to cope with its presence since the late 1960s though their anxieties should not be disregarded (**Appendix B, Photograph 1.17, 1.18**).<sup>91</sup> In terms of safety, concerns with Trident's warheads were also raised when Strathclyde Regional Council called for an immediate halt to the project after the US government's Drell commission expressed fears of an accidental detonation during flight in December 1990.<sup>92</sup> Anglo-American security arrangements prohibited the release of detailed information on the subject but in July 1992 the government agreed to appoint a new nuclear weapons safety watchdog after the chief scientific adviser to the Ministry of Defence expressed concern that reduced expenditure could affect safety.<sup>93</sup> Finally, complications with the Ship Lift instigated fears that it might collapse while in operation, potentially dropping a massive SSBN while being hoisted from the water. The full design safety case was expected to be realised by March 1994, yet by 1999 the Royal Navy still operated the Lift under restricted conditions and had to apply for a separate certificate for each hoist, largely due to frequently modified nuclear safety

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<sup>90</sup> Interview with a resident of Blairmore across from RNAD Coulport (06/11/02).

<sup>91</sup> To the credit of the Ministry of Defence and SEPA it should be noted that over the years the author has spent in Ardentiny he, who is not a biologist, has found Loch Long to be teeming with life. Thousands of waterfowl rests within the waters beside Coulport at any given time, he has witnessed millions of fresh prawn caught along the shoreline at low tide and noticed several species of butterflies in the area.

<sup>92</sup> In mid-1990, the Drell Report raised serious concerns about the design of the missile with scientific experts believing the missile should have been subjected to an immediate national policy review as Trident featured an explosive propellant that 'could be accidentally detonated'. Eighth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 286 of Session 1990-91, p. 9.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement

**Photograph 1.17: View of Ardentinny from Coulport**



**Photograph 1.18: View of Coulport from Ardentinny**



regulations.<sup>94</sup> Due to the system's characteristics, public concerns were understandable but it should be noted that no serious incident had been reported.

Upon the project's completion the environmental impact of construction was irreversible and shore facilities were visually displeasing when set against the breathtaking Scottish countryside. By that time the Clyde Area Public Safety Scheme, designed to safeguard the area and strategically revised in 1982 to accentuate precautions taken by the Ministry of Defence, was drawn up specifically with respect to 'unlikely' accidents with submarine reactors (**Appendix C**).<sup>95</sup> This was a model venture in public relations, but the Scheme, replaced by the Clyde Offsite Safety Plan in 1999, did at least enhance local government's preparedness in the event of some unforeseen emergency. One might already assume that Trident's opponents took little comfort from these arrangements (**Photograph 1.19**). However, though specifics on safety practices during service operations were not readily available, from 1979-1999 delays in independent operation, the absence of serious incident and several environmental indicators verified the achievement of safety guidelines, regardless of ones ideological position on Trident.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> SoS, 24 March 1996, p. 5; HA, 11 April 1996, p. 5; HA, 29 April 1999, p. 11.

<sup>95</sup> Designed with Polaris in mind, it is not clear as to when this plan was introduced. JT Strathclyde Regional Council, *Report of Inquiry into the proposed extension of the Royal Naval Armaments Depot at Coulport, for the Trident Weapon System - 20<sup>th</sup>/24<sup>th</sup> June 1983* (9 September 1983), p. 39.

<sup>96</sup> The Clyde Area Public Safety Scheme was related to emergency responses by fire services, police, and hospitals to offsite effects of accidents at sites with nuclear submarines. In 1998 the Ministry of Defence did admit that there had been thirty-three occasions since 1980 when 'low level' radioactive liquids had been 'unintentionally released' from Faslane into the Clyde. SoS, 30 August 1998, p. 3. Correspondence with Corbett (10/10/03).

**Photograph 1.19: Trident on Loch Long**



Shore facilities and SSBNs were within proximity to numerous homes and communities.

## **Dumbarton District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council**

According to naval historian Peter Nailor, during the construction phase of Polaris the relationship between the Directorate-General of Navy Works and Dumbartonshire County Council was generally good, and improved with Helensburgh authorities who were initially concerned with the effects the development would have upon local affairs and amenities.<sup>97</sup> Under the Trident Works Programme, this close relationship was profoundly transformed as both Dumbarton District and Strathclyde Regional Council's Labour majorities eventually joined the NFLA while offering nothing less than contempt for the project. Though these councils were later dissolved, in 1996 Charles Gray, former Convenor of Strathclyde Regional Council, wrote that 'a cynic might suggest that since local government has taken such a battering at the hands of central government in the last decade or so, any directional change would only be an improvement.'<sup>98</sup> There is a distinct possibility that this comment was made, at least partially, in reference to councils' experiences with Trident.

Dumbarton itself was only one of nineteen district councils that served the region of Strathclyde, and with its high rate of unemployment in 1981 the government and the Ministry of Defence insisted that it could assist in alleviating this depression through Trident.<sup>99</sup> In May of that year Dumbarton and Strathclyde councillors were invited to Helensburgh for a preliminary meeting on Trident, and after repossessing land leased to Metal Industries, the Ministry submitted its Coulport development proposals in

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<sup>97</sup> Nailor, *The Nassau Connection*, p. 97.

<sup>98</sup> C. Gray, 'Scottish Local Government in Europe' in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), p. 256.

<sup>99</sup> I. MacDonald, *Faslane Facts and Feelings: A study of people's knowledge and attitudes*, (Edinburgh: S.R.T. project, Church of Scotland, 1981), p. 11.

June.<sup>100</sup> Massive expansion at Coulport was attributed to Trident's powerful warheads and trigger explosives, and the submitted notice made clear that future provisions would be subject to consultation with local authorities though additional information would be provided following the project's commencement.<sup>101</sup> However, Dumbarton's councillors were unsatisfied, even outraged, with this planning application because plans failed to incorporate geological surveys, independent analysis, civil defence considerations or evaluate planning against the Clyde Area Public Safety Scheme. Additionally, emergency planning for radiological spills only considered clean-up operations for those boats positioned in berth, with no assumption or analysis for boats on the Clyde.<sup>102</sup> The fact that the Ministry also failed to advise on yellow lines, which marked a clear safety distance in the event of an accidental non-nuclear explosion, also infuriated local authorities. Nevertheless, the introduction of several proposals provided only limited information. In the event that the Ministry chose to reject the council's requests, local government was powerless and had only limited legal recourse due to Crown exemption.

Restricted by the interests of national security, Dumbarton's requests for detailed information were indeed legitimate but it must be understood that this was very much a political confrontation. Iain Leitch revealed that the proposal put forward by the Ministry of Defence was ultimately imposed upon councils as it was granted Crown exemption from all planning permission. He also explained that in 1981 the views of Labour-controlled councils were countervailed by the judgements of the Secretary of State for Scotland, a cabinet member of the Conservative government. Therefore,

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<sup>100</sup> This presentation consisted of summarised details and a display of vague plans and sketches. The notice mentioned land required for the site, a road system, support, storage, processing structures and berthing facilities. Interview with Leitch (19/11/02).

<sup>101</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Notice of Proposed Development: Proposed Development*, 2 June 1981, p. 1.

many of Dumbarton and Strathclyde's councillors felt their situation was nothing less than 'farcical'.<sup>103</sup>

Without question Dumbarton District Council's rejection of the 1981 proposal sent shockwaves through to central government. While political feuds intensified between Dumbarton's Labour and Conservative councillors, well placed strategic rumours emerged to the effect that the government was considering relocation of the system. This inflated fears of greater unemployment in Strathclyde Region. While the identities of those responsible for this chatter remains unclear, this was certainly not a possibility due to Faslane's operational suitability and proven success. It was clearly an attempt to pressurise uncooperative Labour councillors. In mid-July, Ian Campbell, Labour MP for West Dumbartonshire, wrote to George Younger and explained that Trident should be subject to public inquiry. However, Malcolm Rifkind, then Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Scottish Office, did not agree.<sup>104</sup> Rifkind rejected Campbell's request, as he believed that there were no grounds on which the Secretary could intervene.<sup>105</sup> By August 1981 the stalemate still had not been resolved, with Dumbarton's planning committee voting in favour of a policy of non-cooperation until vital statistics were supplied.<sup>106</sup> With Coulport's yellow lines remaining an issue of particular interest, the situation was far from defused.

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<sup>102</sup> Interview with Leitch (19/11/02).

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> *HA*, 17 July 1981, p. 3.

<sup>105</sup> *LH*, 31 July 1981, p. 1.

<sup>106</sup> Nine councillors voted to halt talks with the Ministry, five voted to keep negotiations open and only one abstained. Dumbarton's Councillors voted mostly along political lines. *LH*, 14 August 1981, p. 1.

Toeing the party line, Dumbarton's Labour councillors maintained opposition to Trident as both the Ministry of Defence and Dumbarton's Conservative councillors waged a positive, multifaceted campaign for the system in the autumn of 1981.<sup>107</sup> To soothe public concerns with Trident, Commodore George Vailings offered to meet with Helensburgh residents to discuss their concerns with the project.<sup>108</sup>

Conservatives also argued that Dumbarton's Labour majority was ridiculous in its policy of non-cooperation, that local residents were indeed receptive of Trident and that the system was necessary to repel foreign aggression.<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, rumours of Trident's migration proved to be false when the Ministry followed up these assertions by emphasising that, 'too strong a protest, too much inconvenience and too much delay' would not discourage the government's intentions and lead to the project's relocation.<sup>110</sup> Economic opportunity, safety assurances and national security were therefore valid points employed to undermine the proactive campaign waged against the system by local governments, the Christian peace movement and the disarmament movement in Strathclyde at that time.

Dumbarton's Labour majority responded swiftly to this triple salvo, though the Ministry of Defence was inevitably prepared for any riposte. Because Strathclyde Regional Council was the regional planning authority and responsible for major services, Dumbarton consulted Strathclyde on the proposed development at Coulport, with the regional council agreeing to lodge objections in September 1981.

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<sup>107</sup> Labour policy at this time rejected Trident. See Chapter Three: The Scottish political dimension.

<sup>108</sup> *HA*, 4 September 1981, p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Conservative councillor Norman Glen, representing Helensburgh Central, described the Labour majority's policy of non-cooperation with the MoD as 'the height of foolishness' and emphasised that the District Council must participate in negotiations. Murdo MacGregor, Conservative councillor for Lochside, added that the list of objectors to the Trident planning provided an astonishing lack of local names. Hamish Williamson, Councillor for Helensburgh East, stated that without Trident Britain could not deter potential aggressors from sudden invasion. *HA*, 4 September 1981, p. 3; *HA*, 11 September 1981, p. 5; *HA*, 18 September 1981, p. 2.

Strathclyde Regional Council therefore believed the Secretary of State for Scotland should perform an inquiry.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, while the regional council lodged objections with the Scottish Development Department, the Scottish Council for Civil Liberties submitted a draft planning application in October 1981 with Dumbarton District Council to build a study centre in the middle of the proposed Trident complex.<sup>112</sup> Leitch also requested written letters of objection from the general public, whether they were based on environmental, strategic or moral grounds, so that they could be forwarded to Younger.<sup>113</sup> To the satisfaction of Labour councillors, the Ministry confirmed that Coulport construction was delayed due to the intense conflict with Dumbarton District Council. However, for some the Ministry's admission contained a strategic element as it portrayed Dumbarton as insensitive to the area's rate of high unemployment.<sup>114</sup> It is also not unreasonable to assume that central government was informed of the Reagan administration's intentions to upgrade Trident in 1980, and therefore used this opportunity to depict local authority's actions as detrimental to communities while it awaited the final determination from Washington. Nevertheless, the Scottish Development Department rejected plans for an inquiry until 'such time as a view had been established and that view had posed issues which the developing Department could not resolve'.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *HA*, 25 September 1981, p. 1.

<sup>111</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, *Part One: General Report*, p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> SCCL representatives from that period were not available. However, an email correspondence with the Scottish Human Rights Centre revealed that the proposal was probably an attempt 'to block construction of the Trident facilities at Faslane'. Also, the Scottish Development Department administered a number of duties, including social justice, housing area, regeneration, local government, finance, building control. Correspondence with Gillian Econopouly, Administrator for the Scottish Human Rights Centre (5/11/02); *HA*, 30 October 1981, p. 3.

<sup>113</sup> *HA*, 30 October 1981, p. 2.

<sup>114</sup> *HA*, 27 November 1981, p. 1.

<sup>115</sup> Strathclyde Regional Council, *Part One: General Report*, p. 2; *HA*, 6 November 1981, p. 2.

As discussed in Chapter Three, by 1982 the Thatcher government accentuated the economic desirability of Trident in Scotland, rather than an issue of defence, but two influential modifications to the project troubled councils in Strathclyde as they pushed to organise an inquiry. In January of that year Younger requested Dumbarton to re-establish a dialogue with the Ministry, but the council still had not received precise calculations for yellow lines though it gave an 'unqualified' statement that figures would be made available in May 1981.<sup>116</sup> Coincidentally, the district council's experience with the Ministry paralleled Strathclyde Regional Council's investigation of mishandled ballistic missiles at the American Holy Loch Base.<sup>117</sup> Regardless of this, significant developments with Trident threatened to encumber the Inquiry. In March the Thatcher government opted to acquire the upgraded system from the US government, with plans for a ten-fold expansion of Coulport announced by the Conservative Minister of State for Defence, Lord Trenchard.<sup>118</sup> Then, in September 1982, central government's decision to surrender Trident's missile fitting and servicing responsibilities to the US Navy Trident Atlantic Facility fundamentally removed the possibility of 1,500 desperately needed though temporary jobs from coming to Strathclyde. Because this development jeopardised Thatcher's strategy in Scotland the Ministry of Defence agreed that as a result of these changes the 1981 planning application should be withdrawn. This decision did not deter local government from completing an independent study.

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<sup>116</sup> *HA*, 15 January 1982, p. 9; *LH*, 29 January 1982, p. 3; *HA*, 1 January 1982, p. 3.

<sup>117</sup> Strathclyde's investigation started after a missile was dropped into the hold of a supply ship after a crane's brake system failed. *HA*, 29 January 1982, p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> Trident I C4 was upgraded to the Trident II D5 programme and the property line at Coulport was to be extended from 294 to 2,894 acres. *Trident development (Clyde)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 27, Col 265-272, July 16 1982.

In a late 1990s speech to the conference, *A Scottish Parliament: Friend or Foe to Local Government?*, Rosemary McKenna, president of the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities, stated that, 'Our local government colleagues in Europe are astonished when they hear of the level of interference and antagonism from central government, a situation which simply does not exist in any other European country.'<sup>119</sup> Ultimately a critique of the Conservative government's influence over local authorities since 1979, it was also a summary applicable to the experiences of Labour-controlled councils and their experience with Trident. Conservatives from Downing Street to Strathclyde councils were working to clear a path for the deterrent and attempted to smother the Coulport Inquiry by exaggerating the cost estimates of the study. Their figures claimed that nineteen local authorities in Strathclyde would be forced to contribute £1 million.<sup>120</sup> Nevertheless, in August 1982 Strathclyde Regional Council agreed to meet the cost of an independent public inquiry and the council's £150,000 report was significantly less than Conservative estimates suggested. It was completed without participation from the Ministry of Defence.<sup>121</sup>

Released in May 1983, the Coulport Inquiry was dismissed by both opponents and supporters of the system. Labelled as 'a failure' by the SCND, Strathclyde Council's Conservatives believed the report was nothing more than a 'statement of the obvious'.<sup>122</sup> What is not surprising is that central government disregarded the Inquiry, but what is perhaps most puzzling is the fact that the report ultimately failed to

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<sup>119</sup> R. McKenna, 'A Scottish Parliament: Friend or Foe to Local Government' in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), p. 253.

<sup>120</sup> *HA*, 21 May 1982, p. 7; *HA*, 28 May 1982, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> Interview with Dr. Jim Taggart, former member of the AESG Steering Committee and Labour CND (09/11/02); *GH*, 7 July 1982, p. 5; *HA*, 23 July 1982, p. 1.

<sup>122</sup> *HA*, 24 June 1983, p. 9; *GH*, 27 June 1983, p. 7.

support any position on Trident whatsoever.<sup>123</sup> A document of few surprises, the Inquiry failed to inspire either the Scottish media or its public.

As promised the reworked Notice of Proposed Development was released in May 1984 due to modifications to Trident, with the *Greenock Telegraph* emphasising that the Royal Navy moved 'into action...with a fresh salvo in the propaganda battle'.<sup>124</sup> The Ministry of Defence still did not offer information that contented Dumbarton's Labour councillors, and they never received the full safety zone calculations (yellow lines) as it was determined that such data could potentially reveal both the position and number of warheads within the Coulport facility.<sup>125</sup> Though the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities considered holding yet another public inquiry into Coulport's expansion and pressed for amendments of Scottish Development Department advice with regard to proposed defence development on Crown land, these efforts proved fruitless.<sup>126</sup> According to Leitch, 'the Ministry of Defence bulldozed through the plans' after Younger granted approval for the government's intentions.<sup>127</sup> Though easily construed as the ruthless behaviour of a malevolent government, it is more accurate to depict this as an issue of national security being temporarily postponed by developments in Washington and, perhaps, through conflict between political antagonists at the local level.

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<sup>123</sup> *GH*, 9 December 1983, p. 5.

<sup>124</sup> *GT*, 14 May 1984, p. 1.

<sup>125</sup> Royal Navy personnel and members of the Property Services Agency team presented a slide presentation. A Property Services Agency official said that the safety limits were maximum calculations. *LH*, 25 May 1984, p. 17; *LH*, 25 May 1984, p. 15.

<sup>126</sup> COSLA wanted to make clear that such developments raised the degree of public concern, and that a public inquiry should automatically be held. *GH*, 12 February 1985, p. 7.

<sup>127</sup> This was according to Leitch's description of events. Interview with Leitch (19/11/02). Sixth Report from the Defence Committee, HC 549, p. 15.

Beyond the perimeter fences of Coulport and Faslane a colossal programme was underway as Dumbarton District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council lapsed into an irreparable state of paralysis. After March 1985 the Ministry of Defence continued to release its non-negotiable proposals for Trident facilities, and in the aftermath of the Ministry's success Dumbarton's council was forced to visit the more mundane aspects of the project.<sup>128</sup> As early as October 1985, Labour councillors devoted their attentions to the simple visual considerations of Trident, bringing forth a noticeable sense of desperation.<sup>129</sup> According to the district's Charter, it proclaimed that 'Dumbarton District Council is opposed to the installation of Trident Nuclear Missile Systems' because it contended that money spent on greatly increasing Britain's nuclear capacity could have been invested in either the National Health Service or the education system.<sup>130</sup> However, despite strenuous efforts by local authorities between 1980-1985, by 1996 Trident facilities flourished as these councils were disbanded.<sup>131</sup>

### **Strathclyde economy and employment**

Thirty years previous to the Thatcher government's decision to acquire Trident the Strathclyde economy struggled despite the production of Oberon class conventional submarines just outside Glasgow or the introduction of Resolution class boats throughout the 1970s. Therefore, one could not expect Trident to bring forth some unforeseen upsurge in the Scottish economy. If we first look back to the early 1900s, the government requested John Brown in Clydebank to assemble three submarines for

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<sup>128</sup> Property Sales Agency, *United Kingdom Trident Training Facility; GH*, 2 August 1985, p. 6.

<sup>129</sup> DL Dumbarton District Council, *Index of Minutes of Meetings*, 14 October 1985, pp. 1386-1387.

<sup>130</sup> HL *Dumbarton District Council Charter*, (no date).

<sup>131</sup> For more on this disbanding see Chapter Four: Civil Society and Public Opinion.

the Royal Navy, but the yard made the mistake of rejecting further offers and stuck with surface warships (**Photograph 1.20, 1.21**).<sup>132</sup> With coal and shipbuilding suffering rapid contraction since the late 1950s people requiring economic assistance doubled between 1962-1972 due to high unemployment, an ageing population, and the increased percentage of single mothers and wives.<sup>133</sup> By this time Scotland discovered that, like the rest of Britain, its outmoded industrial plants could not vie with contemporary commercial production from abroad. Scottish shipbuilding industries were the most apparent failure, and the immense Clydeside shipyards that once delivered massive ocean liners became insolvent as several commercial enterprises once controlled by Scots had been merged into either English or multinational conglomerates.<sup>134</sup> With the Scottish economy in serious turmoil, by July 1980 Trident permitted central government to amplify the economic benefits of the system to Strathclyde residents in the hope that it would generate greater public support for the party, its nuclear defence policy and the system itself.

The level of employment Trident could provide for Strathclyde's workers would not rectify the Scottish economy's deep-seated structural problems, but its ability to slow the rising rate of unemployment could not be discounted. According to Hall, during the operation of Polaris the civilian complement at shore establishments in June 1969 accounted for 1,786 employees.<sup>135</sup> However, since 1979 the Strathclyde Region had lost 154,000 jobs, of which 134,000 had been in the manufacturing sector, and

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<sup>132</sup> Scotts were the experts and the yard did not believe the submarine had a future. I. Johnston, *Ships for a nation: John Brown and Company Clydebank 1847-1971* (West Dumbartonshire Libraries and Museums, 2000), p. 162.

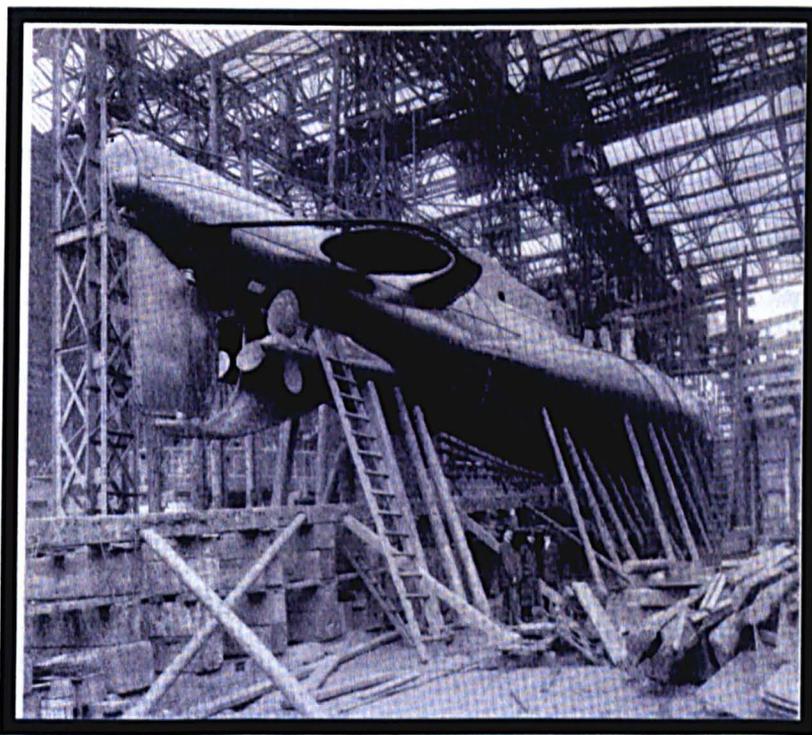
<sup>133</sup> C. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), p. 158.

<sup>134</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, pp. 158-159.

**Photograph 1.20: E class submarine launched in November 1916**



**Photograph 1.21: E class submarine on the stocks (1916)**



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<sup>135</sup> Hall, *Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 59.

in the Dumbarton district alone the unemployment rate in 1981 was 17.9 per cent with a total of 5,432 jobless.<sup>136</sup> In 1983 the Strathclyde Region still harboured a 17.4 per cent unemployment rate, and by 1984 its sagging economy provided the Ministry of Defence with an excellent opportunity to verify Trident's socio-economic worth as areas like the Vale of Leven, Dumbarton and Helensburgh sustained 6,716 unemployed in February, as compared to 6,402 from December 1983.<sup>137</sup> By this time a strong dependency on the defence industry was made most apparent when the Church of Scotland's Iain O. MacDonald wrote that Helensburgh's professional community claimed that Coulport and Faslane had insulated the local area.<sup>138</sup> What was beneficial for Helensburgh was less helpful to surrounding communities. With unemployment in Scotland still at 14.8 per cent in 1987, two years later its industrial workforce was only 58 per cent of what it was in 1972.<sup>139</sup> Of the top ten unemployment black spot areas in 1989, Strathclyde, Fife and the Western Isles occupied the top three places, representing more than half of Scotland's populace.<sup>140</sup> Left with few alternatives, the working men and women of Strathclyde would have to accept any opportunities provided by Trident.

Despite the arguments of Conservative MPs who believed that Trident had the ability to provide tens of thousands of jobs, it must be remembered that the system was not acquired by central government to strengthen the Strathclyde economy but to ensure greater national security. This was a certainty easily displayed through the rhetoric produced in local government and the Commons. Trident itself was not a straightforward duplication of Polaris and, amongst a number of improvements, its

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<sup>136</sup> MacDonald, *Faslane Facts and Feelings*, p. 11.

<sup>137</sup> *HA*, 10 February 1984, p. 5.

<sup>138</sup> MacDonald, *Faslane Facts and Feelings*, p. 15.

<sup>139</sup> DL Alternative Employment Study Group, *Future Imperfect: Trident and the Clyde*, (1988), p. 4.

patrol durations were longer, its refit schedules were less frequent and its missiles were to be serviced outside the UK. This implied that the system demanded less from the Ministry of Defence but provided more in terms of performance. Because the Vanguard class incorporated tremendous technical improvements and ease of maintenance over earlier designs, this system embodied greater efficiency.<sup>141</sup> These improvements held notable implications for shore facilities. With less service time required for the modern Trident system, various items were stripped down, cleaned or replaced less frequently, and minimal upgrading would be required during the earliest stages of its operation. Workshop and support facilities would also have less extensive requirements, and, though unclear, it appears that only accommodation facilities could be renewed as frequently as that of Polaris.<sup>142</sup> In terms of employment, Trident was not designed to support the same numbers as its predecessor.

Along with the system's technical superiority and reduced maintenance, modifications to the project in 1982 further weakened the system's economic influence over Strathclyde. In July of that year Lord Trenchard emphasised that Coulport expansion was 'essential for the country, good for Scotland and on balance good for the locality'.<sup>143</sup> There were obvious contradictions to come as the cancellation of Trident missile fitting and servicing on 9 September 1982 dictated that the UK transferred these responsibilities to the US facility in King's Bay, Georgia.<sup>144</sup> The announcement dissolved 1,500 jobs once earmarked for construction and it induced serious anxieties for the 2,000 Coulport employees. Dumbarton councillor, Billy Petrie, a strong

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<sup>140</sup> *Opposition Day*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Col 253 Vol 159, 31 October 1989.

<sup>141</sup> Hutchinson, *war beneath the waves*, p. 166.

<sup>142</sup> Hotel facilities included bunks, galley equipment, mess compartments, etc. Correspondence with Corbett (10/10/03).

<sup>143</sup> *Trident Development (Clyde)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 27 Col 265-272, 6 July 1982.

<sup>144</sup> Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, p. 137.

advocate for Trident, soon expressed regret over this decision as young people leaving schools early in surrounding areas 'lost their best hopes for employment'.<sup>145</sup> In 1983 Strathclyde's Coulport Inquiry acknowledged this restructuring, with the '1,000/1,700 construction jobs originally postulated being considerably, if not drastically, reduced'.<sup>146</sup> Yet while this development challenged Trident's reputation as a reliable source of employment, arrangements for processing Polaris missiles at Coulport remained unchanged and would continue until it was phased out in the 1990s.<sup>147</sup> The west of Scotland would therefore accommodate both the Polaris and Trident weapon systems at some point. It would eventually do so through reduced levels of employment.

By May 1984 Trident boat designs were approved, construction of the Vanguard class at VSEL was set to commence and the Ministry of Defence was prepared to launch the Trident Works Programme. After releasing its revised Notice of Proposed Development the Ministry opted to provide employment figures for 'peak years' of construction, rather than predicting the number of jobs the system would generate on an annual basis. This presented figures in the most favourable light. It estimated that direct employment from Trident involved roughly 1,550 jobs at the height of construction in 1988, with 1,100 of those positions filled by Strathclyde residents and 390 of those to be filled by Dumbarton residents. It also stressed that a rapid build-up of construction workers was expected between 1985 and 1988, 'followed by an

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<sup>145</sup> HA, 24 September 1982, p. 7.

<sup>146</sup> The report stated that it would 'not increase the number of permanent jobs in the general area' and that temporary employment's impact would be 'short-term'. Iain Leitch further emphasised that losing Coulport was 'no real loss' due to the temporary nature of the employment, a view shared by the 1985 and 1988 studies offered by the AESG. GH, 10 September 1982, p. 4; Strathclyde Regional Council, *Part One: General Report*, p. 30.

<sup>147</sup> Office of Commodore Clyde, *Trident - Public announcement by the Secretary of State for Defence on 9 September 1982*, (Faslane: Dunbartonshire).

almost equally rapid fall from 1988 to 1992'. To offset the decline in numbers employed, Ministry projections suggested that numbers of Service and civilian personnel at Faslane 'will have risen by about 800 by 1990 and by 1300 by 1994, thereafter falling back to 500 more than the current level, and remaining at this figure in the longer term'.<sup>148</sup> However, this was putting spin on an analysis that potentially cloaked unimpressive employment statistics, coinciding with the 1,500 jobs previously lost at Coulport. This inspired the Alternative Employment Study Group (AESG) to argue that there were other viable options, and that Trident was not the ideal candidate for improving Strathclyde's high rate of unemployment.

The AESG, a Labour Party initiative, was first conceptualised after a Helensburgh CND meeting in 1982 and established in Dumbarton the following year to evaluate the impact of Trident on the local community. Though debatable, Dr. Jim Taggart of Labour CND explained that it was conducted on 'a non-political basis', and also involved both the SNP and Faslane shop stewards.<sup>149</sup> Addressing such issues as Trident development, its impact to Faslane's civilian workforce, defence expenditure and unemployment, the Group released the first of two Trident-based studies in May 1985.

The Ministry of Defence had at that time stressed the importance of Faslane as a source of regional employment, but the Group asserted that 'practically no new jobs have been created as a result of the decision to opt for Trident'.<sup>150</sup> In fairness, it should be noted that this was a premature observation as the Secretary of State for

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<sup>148</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Environmental Impact Assessment*, p. 103.

<sup>149</sup> Interview with Taggart (09/11/02).

<sup>150</sup> The Study Group involved MP Norman Godman, Iain MacDonald, Russell Fleming, Ian Leitch, Steve Schofield and Jim Taggart. AESG, *Polaris and Trident*, p. 14.

Scotland had just approved the planning application for Trident some two months earlier. However, the report noted that British companies generally failed to win major Trident-related orders in the US, and it would later be revealed that outside contractors eventually detracted from Strathclyde as the Property Sales Agency awarded massive, specialised contracts to companies like Hawker Siddeley Power Engineering Ltd of Loughborough, an English engineering firm.<sup>151</sup> The SSBN was a source of considerable expenditure on the Clyde and as a consequence, of various forms of short-term employment, but the AESG also emphasised that it was not 'liable to be a source of new long-term employment' as Trident possessed greater efficiency to that of Polaris (**Photograph 1.22, 1.23**). Furthermore, because its cancellation would likely have the Royal Navy retain and expand its conventional submarine capacity, the Group argued that decommissioning held the potential to support an increase in the size of the submarine fleet and workforce while promoting improved job security.<sup>152</sup> For several reasons central government considered this unacceptable, as a conventional fleet undermined the very act of deterrence, but this analysis provided solutions that complemented both Labour and SNP policies on disarmament. Like that of North Sea oil, Scottish participation with Trident represented 'a failure of the Scottish economy to take its rightful place in...development and production' of certain submarine technologies as there had been no investment in 'a large and powerful indigenous' sector that served the SSBN.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> A local company was unable to provide the necessary services and this contract was worth £25.3 million. *HA*, 22 January 1988, p. 15; *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 82 Col 169, July 1985; *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 78 Col 509 10 May 1985.

<sup>152</sup> AESG, *Polaris and Trident*, p. 36

**Photograph 1.22: Advertisement in the Helensburgh Advertiser**

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**NAVAL ARCHITECT, MARINE, MECHANICAL OR ELECTRICAL ENGINEER.**

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**Photograph 1.23: Advertisement in Faslane Fair programme**

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<sup>153</sup> Yards in Scotland were familiar with the construction of conventional submarines but inexperienced with the SSBN. P. L. Payne, 'The Economy', in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the*

This brings us to a comparison between Scotland's experience with North Sea oil and the country's failure to assume an active role in the production of nuclear-powered submarines. It was a sequence of events in the 1950s and early 1960s that led to the exploration and extraction of what the nationalists referred to as 'Scotland's oil'.<sup>154</sup> Roughly a decade after the Second World War American dominance of the world energy market was under threat when Japan, Germany, Italy and France emerged as industrial rivals to the US. These were front-line states in the Cold War but because they sought to release themselves of US-controlled energy they turned to the Middle East, an area considered politically unstable by the Americans, and the Soviet Union, which was supplying oil technology. Furthermore, both the American government and US oil companies became somewhat apprehensive when the Organisation for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) was formed in 1960.<sup>155</sup> To compensate for these developments, exploration by the US oil industry was to be focused on politically stable countries. It also preferred to deal with those who would not bolster the Soviet Union's own military-industrial complex through the purchase of oil technologies. Therefore, the discovery of North Sea oil was not an accident and it was largely a product of strategic planning.<sup>156</sup>

After the discovery of North Sea oil in 1969, the extraction was to be performed at the fastest rate possible. Similar to that of SSBN development and production, Scottish

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*Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), p. 29.

<sup>154</sup> In the October 1974 General Election the SNP won 11 MPs and managed to get over 30 per cent of the vote in Scotland. The main driving force behind the growth of the party in the 1970s was the discovery of oil in the North Sea off the coast of Scotland. The SNP ran a hugely successful *It's Scotland's Oil* campaign, emphasising the way in which they believed the discovery of oil could benefit all of Scotland's citizens. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 167.

<sup>155</sup> OPEC was a permanent, intergovernmental organisation created at the Baghdad Conference on September 10–14, 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.

<sup>156</sup> There was a close commercial partnership between American and British oil companies and banks. C. Woolfson, J. Foster, and M. Beck, *Paying for the piper: capital and labour in Britain's offshore oil industry* (London: Mansell, 1996), pp. 15-19.

industry was not prepared for the oil industry. With only a narrow window of opportunity, it faced insurmountable barriers. For offshore drilling rigs, the steel required for platform construction and tubular pipelines was of a totally different character from that which the Scottish mills were capable of producing.<sup>157</sup>

Comparable to platform construction, Scottish yards had no previous experience with the design or production of nuclear-powered submarines while VSEL in Barrow-in-Furness had already assembled Polaris boats. Furthermore, Clyde shipyards proved incapable of offering the correct venue for offshore platform jackets. Ships were built primarily from welded steel plate, but platform jackets were constructed from rolled and tubular steel, connected by a technique requiring specialised rolling machines and automatic welding.<sup>158</sup> With the Trident system, the Clyde shipyards did not possess the appropriate modernised facilities where SSBNs could be assembled on cradles and have a rail system where the vessel, in whole or parts, could be moved out to a Shiplift.<sup>159</sup> At several levels, the comparisons between North Sea oil and the SSBN are noteworthy. Scottish industry did not understand the oil industry, SSBN production or their requirements until the opportunity had already lapsed. Be that as it may, the AESG already had its doubts and made one last attempt to persuade both central government and the British electorate to reconsider.

According to Professor Paul Dunne of the Middlesex University Business School, during the 1980s the defence industry in the UK became increasingly important to manufacturing as it was 'protected from the ravages wrought on the rest of the

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<sup>157</sup> Payne, *Scotland in the Twentieth Century*, p. 31

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*, p. 31

<sup>159</sup> K. Parlington, 'Coulport and Faslane general management' in F.D.R. Yell (ed.), *Trident Facilities: Proceedings of the conference organized by the Institute of Civil Engineers, held in London on 14 April 1994* (London: Thomas Telford, 1994), p. 121.

industry'.<sup>160</sup> The defence industrial base may have supported jobs but Dunne argued that it diverted resources from other uses, it crowded out investment from the civil sector and he claimed that the Military Industrial Complex 'invented threats'.<sup>161</sup> While SS-20s in Eastern Europe were a very real source of concern, by March 1988 the AESG disregarded this and continued with the argument that Trident was incapable of reviving the local or national economy because it only supported limited employment. Yet what the AESG failed to appreciate was that, for central government, strategic concerns took precedence over economics in the midst of the Cold War, at least to some extent. It was this set of priorities that prompted concerns within the House of Commons over the £5,000 million Trident project in the early 1980s, and it was this that incapacitated the Group's theory that it was poor economic policy to use defence spending to create jobs.<sup>162</sup> However, while the AESG focused its arguments on the economic implications of Trident there was a noticeable contrast in the tone of *Future Imperfect*. With the deterrent pushing towards completion at this point, and after Thatcher's victory during the 1987 general election, the group became disillusioned. After six years of research and little hope of convincing the Thatcher government otherwise, the AESG was quietly disbanded as its findings ultimately fell upon deaf ears.<sup>163</sup>

With the somewhat unexpected demise of the communist superpower in 1991 Trident submarines were late in discharging their responsibilities. Nevertheless, while statistics pertaining to the temporary employment provided by Trident remain illusive,

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<sup>160</sup> Dunne also argued that 'the results suggest a negative effect of military spending on economic growth for advanced economies' and decreased military spending could improve economic performance when savings were allocated. P. Dunne, *Restructuring of the British Defence Industry* (Middlesex: Middlesex University Business School, December 1999), p. 8.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid

operation of the system itself did not represent the employment bonanza initially envisaged by the Conservatives.<sup>164</sup> Also explained in Chapter Three, Sir Hector Monro, Conservative MP for Dumfries, insisted in 1985 that 50,000 jobs could have been lost in Scotland if the system was not implemented.<sup>165</sup> Initial reactions to such a figure established a sense of urgency, but there was no detailed reference made to specific locations, direct and indirect employment, or estimates pertaining to Service personnel, civilian staff or contractors. Therefore, because the definition of this figure was so vague it could be construed as misleading. What is certain is that employment estimates were predicted on a shifting scale as the transfer of missile fitting and servicing in September 1982, and the closure of Rosyth Royal Dockyard in 1993, obliterated all previous estimates. Furthermore, from 1980-1997 the deployment of Ministry civilian personnel in Scotland plunged from 21,900 full-time employees in 1980 to 4,800 in 1997 through the influence of the Cold War's thaw.<sup>166</sup> However, the system still accounted for a majority of the latter figure.

In terms of employment the proposal of commercial management at shore establishments in Scotland also sparked a controversy, and remains so at time of writing (2004). According to Robert Purdie, Faslane shop steward, by 1999 the trade unions sought protection from privatisation by finding additional savings within the Ministry, and unions still experienced redundancies as rumours circulated that Faslane was in danger of losing its exemption clause despite the UK's 'need' for a nuclear

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<sup>162</sup> AESG, *Future Imperfect*, pp. 15-37; Third Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 356 of session 1986-1987, pp.11-12.

<sup>163</sup> Interview with Taggart (09/11/02)..

<sup>164</sup> For more on Conservative estimates see Chapter Three: The Scottish political dimension of Trident.

<sup>165</sup> *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 82 Col 169, July 1985; *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 78 Col 509, 10 May 1985.

<sup>166</sup> B. Morgan, *Defence Employment: 1996-97* (House of Commons Research Paper 99/27, 11 March 1999), p. 7.

deterrent.<sup>167</sup> Civilian employees at Rosyth Dockyard in Fife were also susceptible to the impact of commercial management before 1993. Due to safety considerations the Defence Select Committee and Public Accounts Committee criticised the idea of commercial management of Rosyth in 1988, and the National Audit Office debated as to whether the Government's objectives of greater dockyard efficiency, maximum competition and better value for money were likely to be achieved. Yet in that same year the Dockyard Services Bill was eventually cleared through Parliament after twenty-five sittings.<sup>168</sup> Despite concerns with privatisation, the *Helensburgh Advertiser* stressed in 1992 that 'development [at Faslane] has brought huge benefits to the local area and to the west of Scotland in general'.<sup>169</sup> The assertion was relatively accurate but questions still remained.

If we disregard estimates for Service personnel, external contractors and such and maintain focus on the core number of long-term civilian jobs shore facilities provided since the introduction of Polaris, the picture becomes more transparent. In 1969 Polaris accounted for nearly 1,800 civilian employees, and after Trident came under construction both systems supported 3,891 civilians in 1989, with roughly the same number in 1996.<sup>170</sup> However, it must be remembered that in 1969 the full fleet of four Resolution class boats had not yet arrived, and it was not until after the decommissioning of Polaris that the number of civilian jobs with Trident finally became more stable. By February 2000 John Spellar, Minister for the Armed Forces, stated that Trident shore facilities had a directly employed work force of only 3,300,

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<sup>167</sup> Base services considered for privatisation involved transport and support. Interview with Robert Purdie, Faslane Shop Steward (02/06/03); *HA*, 10 July 1992, p. 1; *HA*, 28 June 1991, p. 1.

<sup>168</sup> See Chapter 2. Dockyard management also had numerous concerns with the transfer to commercial management. Report by the Comptroller and the Auditor General, *Transfer of the Royal Dockyard to Commercial Management*, (London: HMSO, 3 March 1988), pp. 1,5.

<sup>169</sup> *Faslane Features*, summer 1992, p. 1.

'comprising 2,547 at Faslane and 752.5 at Coulport'.<sup>171</sup> Between 1989-1999 this was an overall reduction in civilian manpower of nearly 18 per cent from a project that cost British taxpayers nearly £2 billion at 1994 prices.

The fact that the system still represented a considerable number of civilian jobs and indirect employment is indisputable, but well into the post-Cold War era Trident's opposition often argued that the system accounted for zero job growth, the capabilities of irrational rogue states did not justify a British system and Scotland's annual contribution to the system of £135 million could be better spent elsewhere.<sup>172</sup>

Furthermore, short-term opportunities in Scotland involving the production of periscopes, hulls and navigation systems for Trident expired sometime in the mid-1990s.<sup>173</sup> Ravenscraig steelworks was also closed in 1992, despite the production of steel plates for Vanguard class boats. One must again bear in mind that the system was not acquired to strengthen either local or national economies, but with the government's attempts to silence opposition it was repeatedly sold to Scots as such. Over the course of decades Scottish workers had been conditioned to rely on the Ministry of Defence, and though Trident safeguarded the Strathclyde economy from further despair it also did nothing to invigorate it.

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<sup>170</sup> The 1969 and 1996 estimate provided by Hall, *Clyde Submarine Base*, p. 100; *Nuclear Defence Industry (Scotland)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) Col 684 Vol 163, 13 December 1989.

<sup>171</sup> *Civilians (Faslane and Coulport)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Col 738W Vol 344, 21 February 2000.

<sup>172</sup> Civilian employees and the Argyll and Bute territory should see further reductions as efficiency continues to improve. The Astute class, to be stationed at Faslane, would not require refuelling throughout their anticipated lifetime of up to thirty years. Van Der Vat, *Standard of Power*, p. 418. Interview with Ainslie (24/06/03); SNP 'SNP join Scottish CND in Edinburgh: Only independent parliament can remove Trident', (SNP Archives), 18 May 1997.

<sup>173</sup> GCUA Speech by Richard Leonard, *The Economic Consequences of Trident* (March 1994), p. 2; *GH*, 3 December 1985, p.1.

## **Conclusion**

When attempting to establish a perspective on the Strathclyde Region's experience with Trident it becomes apparent that three indisputable considerations clearly undermined the aspirations of the system's opposition over the course of two decades, regardless of the lingering debate. Firstly, with both Coulport and Faslane successfully accommodating the Resolution class since 1968 there was little doubt in Strathclyde that Trident would be deployed from the west of Scotland. Secondly, after living with American and British Polaris systems for two decades, an unspecified number of citizens believed that a third system was little cause for alarm. Finally, by 1999 Trident shore facilities still employed 3,300 civilians in the post-Cold War era, and despite the limited return on a massive investment, it represented a sum total not easily displaced. A sequence of events therefore cemented Trident's place in Strathclyde.

In terms of geography and performance the region was already a proven operational site for the Vanguard class. Nuclear weapons, which served to bolster national security throughout the Cold War era, had also been trafficked through Scottish lochs since 1961. Because the Polaris system was implemented safely and remained without serious incident, it could be argued that Strathclyde had become somewhat comfortable with the SSBN. Scottish familiarity with the Polaris system therefore eased the transition to the Trident system. However, due to consistent economic hardship, it was employment that served as Trident's anchor amidst varying waves of protest. Few in Scotland chose to challenge either the sense of security or the frequently publicised employment that the system was thought to provide.

If we disengage from the endeavours of protest groups at this time, it must be acknowledged that a considerable degree of opposition in the Strathclyde territory was a political undertaking. Labour controlled councils in the west of Scotland vehemently followed party policy, as did Conservative councillors, and both made clear attempts to achieve their respective party's objectives. Nevertheless, in the early 1980s Crown exemption, complemented by central government's persistence, served as the final determination. As has also been shown quite extensively, local media, willing or not, was frequently employed to broadcast political agendas and this was a tactic which thoroughly exaggerated the intensity of the situation. Consequently, because of Labour's stranglehold on Dumbarton District Council and Strathclyde Regional Council, opposition to Trident was unmistakably distorted and should not be construed as the public's true reaction.

The general public was granted numerous opportunities to make known their displeasure with Trident over the twenty-year period, yet only a limited degree of resistance was ever exhibited. Such opportunities came when Commodore George Vailings offered to meet with Helensburgh residents in 1981 to discuss the Trident issue, when the Ministry of Defence released several proposals to Dumbarton District Council from 1981-1989 and during the arrival of Vanguard class SSBNs from October 1992 to May 1999. Yet none of these events, including the transformation of the Scottish countryside or waterways, inspired monumental acts of civil disobedience or mass protest. When the Trident Works Programme was granted approval in 1985, the issue was emasculated. Trident was indeed unpopular with many of Strathclyde's resident, and the country in general, but this disfavour did not embody a noticeable

political or civil reaction due to concerns with national security and a somewhat self-induced form of rationalisation.

Circumstances during the Cold War's thaw further assisted central government's intentions. Scottish fears of nuclear exchange with the Soviet Union greatly receded while Strathclyde's civilian employees enjoyed benefits from a deterrent that had, in geographical terms, no specific assignment.<sup>174</sup> Helen Steven of the Iona Community also believed that the withdrawal of the US Polaris fleet from the Holy Loch may have led to confusion regarding the status of the Vanguard class.<sup>175</sup> Whatever the circumstances, it was this timeline that ultimately worked in Trident's favour. A credible number of residents who seriously contemplated this issue willingly suppressed their uneasiness with nuclear weapons. Within an unspecified social contract established between the people of Strathclyde and central government, so long as Trident was maintained safely and provided significant employment the UK's deterrent would remain undisturbed. As the next chapter will explain, this peculiar agreement was not extended to the residents of Fife.

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<sup>174</sup> On May 11, 1995 more than 170 countries attended the 1995 Non Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference (NPTREC) in New York. S. Howard, 'A Receding Disarmament Horizon? Lessons From An Era of Retreat and Defeat', *Disarmament Diplomacy*, (Vol. 73, October/November 2003), p. 12.

<sup>175</sup> Conversation/Correspondence with Helen Steven, Iona Community (04/03/03).

## Chapter Two: Trident and the Fife Region

After acquiring an impressive degree of technical expertise with the Polaris system, Rosyth Dockyard in Fife was the prime candidate for Trident refitting and refuelling operations. Yet this aptitude for submarine work did not prevent one of Scotland's largest industrial employers from being abruptly stripped of these responsibilities. Though the system would be successfully deployed from the west of Scotland, operations once reserved to the Fife facility were controversially transferred to the south of England in June 1993. In economic terms, the loss of these duties proved to be nothing less than disastrous. Therefore, it is the intention of this chapter to address the issues that accompanied this most complicated scenario, and while the Dockyard's historic loss has not been properly investigated until this point, it should be recognised that at least two inconspicuous factors have remained unacknowledged. The Cold War's unforeseen thaw and subsequent restructuring by the Royal Navy were the overwhelming influences that undermined the viability of this facility.

Correspondences with a former Dockyard project manager, Labour party officials and a retired member of Dunfermline District Council proved most beneficial to this research, with documents provided by Rosyth trade unions and Dockyard management assisting in the creation of a suitable historical account. For those whose livelihoods relied on this unique facility the handling of this entire affair was most unfortunate. In order fully to appreciate Fife's ordeal it is first necessary to explore its origins to illustrate why the Fife Region was initially selected to service the Trident deterrent.

## Rosyth Dockyard: From its origins to RD 57

When exploring the Region's tragic experience with Trident it is first necessary to appreciate the significance of the naval establishment to surrounding communities. In the early 1900s the Royal Navy sought to establish an east coast naval base and dockyard, with the government's 1903 decision to construct a facility in Rosyth leading to the creation of a new-fashioned community with roughly 30,000 residents.<sup>1</sup>

According to naval historian Dan Van Der Vat:

...the first visible British countermeasure to German naval expansionism ...took the form of...a new base at Rosyth, in the Firth of Forth on Scotland's east coast, 400 miles or so north of all other important naval bases. The port faced north-east – towards Germany'.<sup>2</sup>

Europe at that time was preparing for what would become a most horrendous conflict, with work at this establishment steadily progressing as temporary accommodation was provided for men who were building, and eventually working, in the Dockyard. Coinciding with this came the need for shops, churches, schools and places of leisure, inspiring yet further development (**Photograph 2.1**).<sup>3</sup> Though the Dockyard itself was not completed at the outbreak of the First World War, it eventually went on successfully to repair seventy-eight capital ships, eight-two light cruisers and thirty-seven smaller craft between 1914-1918. However, despite commendable service the civilian workload at Rosyth was considerably reduced by 1926 as the shipbreaking

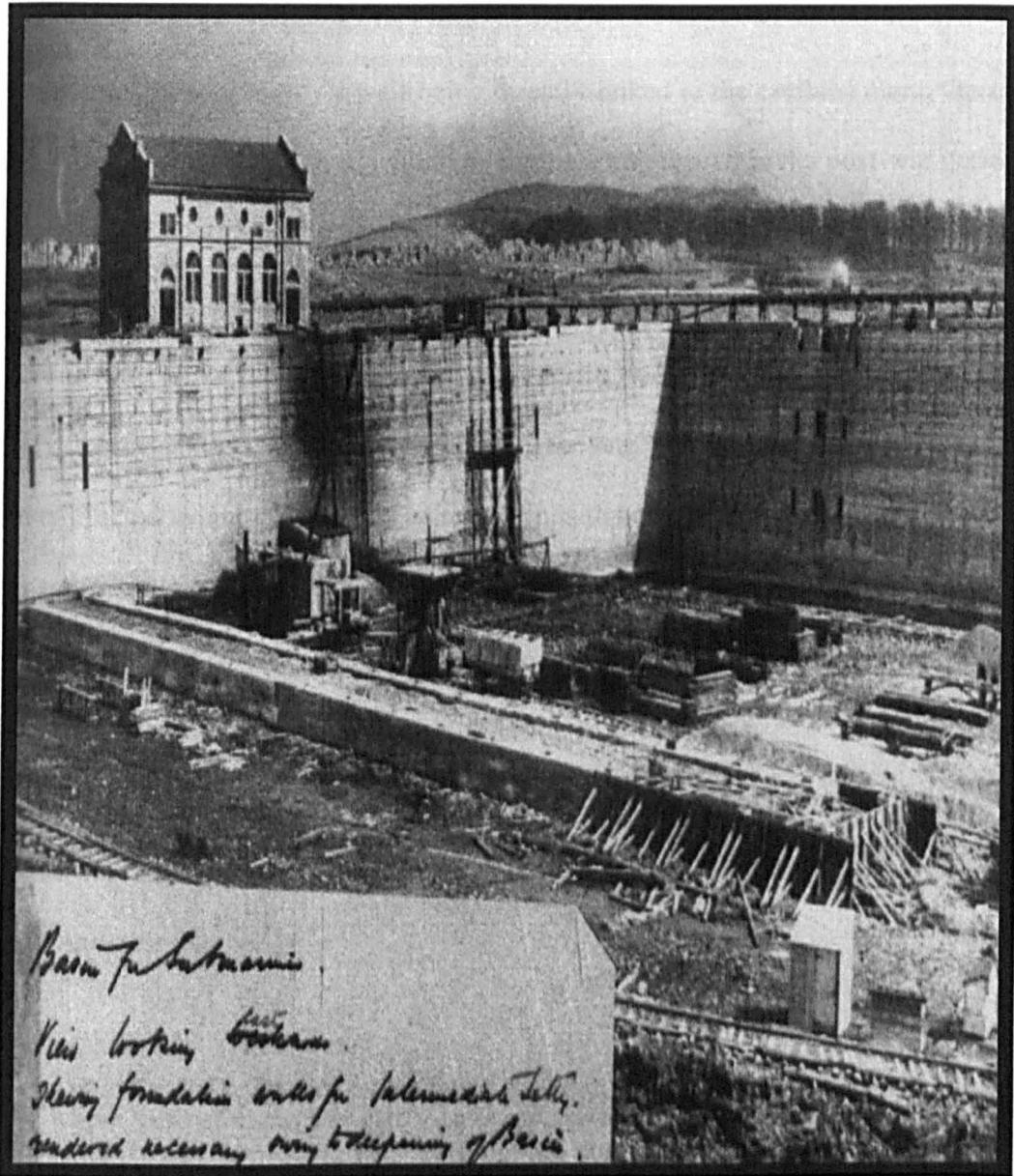
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<sup>1</sup> Easton Gibb was awarded the main contract in 1909. M. Rodgers, *Images of Scotland: Rosyth* (Gloucestershire: Tempus Publishing, 1999), p. 19

<sup>2</sup> Van Der Vat, *Standard of Power*, p. 13,14.

<sup>3</sup> During this period Dunfermline Town Council, perhaps interpreting the development of Rosyth as a potential rival to its own position in the region, extended its boundaries southwards to incorporate the area. Rodgers, *Rosyth*, p. 19.

Photograph 2.1: Submarine basin, 1913



More commonly referred to as the tidal pool, this is the eastern view at Rosyth Dockyard showing foundation walls for the immediate jetty rendered necessary for the deepening of the basin.

firm, again Metal Industries, only used the facility to dismantle naval and merchant ships.<sup>4</sup> It would not be until the Second World War that it was fully reopened, with men transferred from southern dockyards to bring the facility to strength.<sup>5</sup>

With the young community's well-being directly linked to the establishment, there were growing fears that Rosyth would be permanently retired in the post-war period, but in 1946 the trade unions were proactive in attempting to counter any move to shut the facility down (**Photograph 2.2**). These efforts may have bought the Dockyard precious time. According to local historian Martin Rodgers, a 'considerable amount of development work was carried out' during the late 1940s and 1950s with 'more houses erected in Rosyth'.<sup>6</sup> Yet despite previous threats of closure the rise of the Cold War quickly renewed its function. Just previous to Macmillan completing the deal for Polaris with the Kennedy administration in April 1963, the Admiralty Polaris Committee already agreed that a nuclear refitting facility would be required for Polaris SSBNs. The Civil Lord of the Admiralty, Ian Orr Ewing, emphasised that Rosyth should refit the new sea-based deterrent as well as other SSNs in April of that year.<sup>7</sup> According to Nailor:

The refit yard for the submarines was to be H.M. Dockyard, Rosyth, where extensions to the yard's capacity were already underway to enable HMS *Dreadnought* and later hunter/killer submarines to be refitted. Later H.M. Dockyard, Chatham, was equipped to provide a comparable range of services for the SSNs and Rosyth was reserved to the Polaris Squadron.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Metal Industries also operated from Faslane. See Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region.

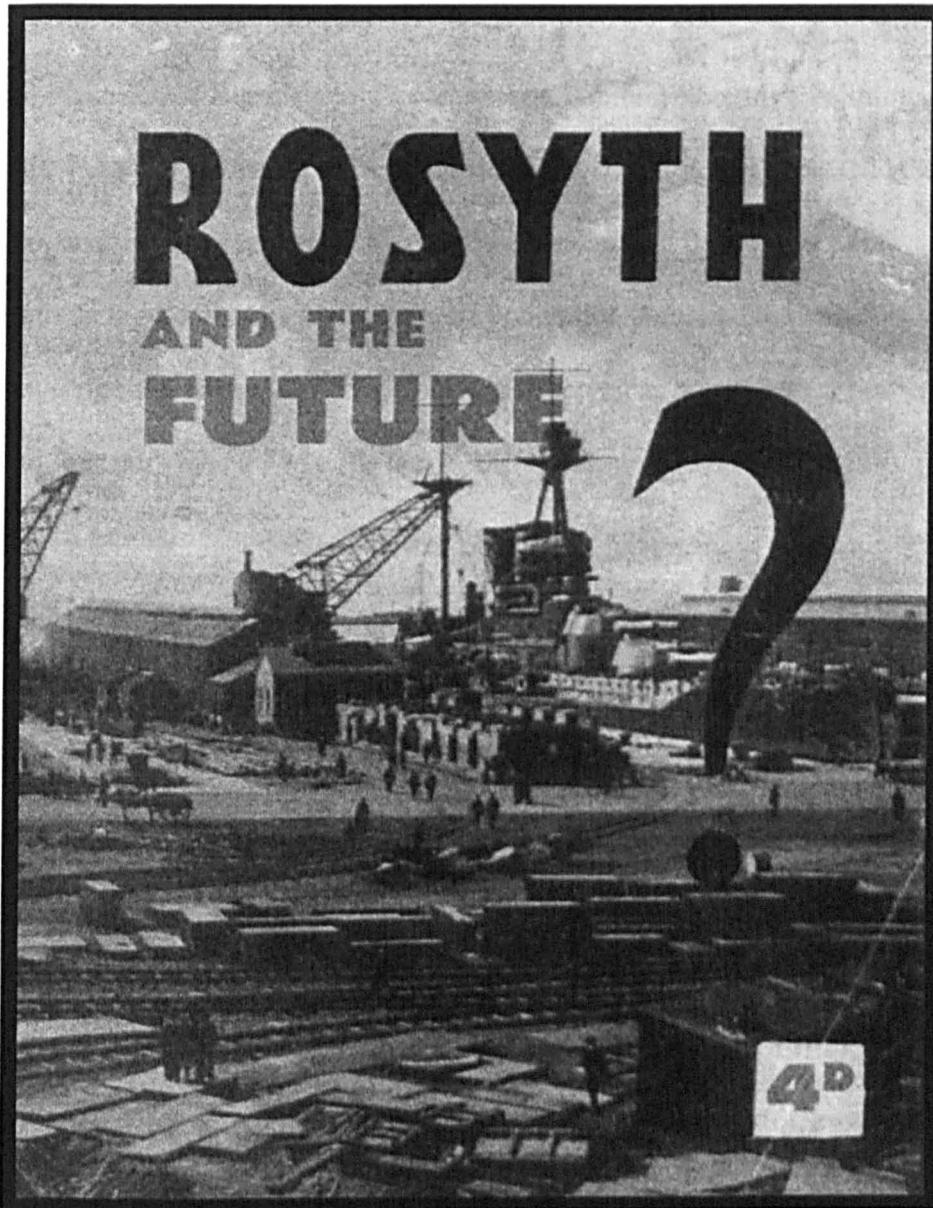
<sup>5</sup> Rodgers, *Rosyth*, pp. 7-38.

<sup>6</sup> Specifics regarding trade unions and the term 'development work' are unclear. *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>7</sup> *Polaris submarines (Operating Base)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 676 Col 219, 24 April 1963.

<sup>8</sup> Nailor, *The Nassau Connection*, p. 91.

Photograph 2.2: The case for retaining the Dockyard, 1946



As World War Two came to an end, the trade unions remained active in trying to counter moves to close the Dockyard. This is the cover of a booklet published in February 1946.

Selected as the first British dockyard to perform such refits, it was theoretically capable of refitting any naval vessel with the Rosyth yard effectively supporting the Polaris deterrent until its replacement with the Trident.

Communities such as Burntisland, Cowdenbeath, Dunfermline, Inverkeithing and Kirkcaldy were within direct proximity to the naval complex that enclosed HMS *Cochrane* and the Dockyard, with St Andrews northeast of the complex and Edinburgh, being Scotland's second largest population component, twelve miles southeast of the site (Map 2.1).<sup>9</sup> The Base alone served as homeport for numerous ships and four destroyers, while the Dockyard was responsible for the refitting and refuelling of numerous vessels, including the Resolution class.<sup>10</sup>

Refits for Polaris included the maintenance and renewal of those items aboard the submarine that wore out, broke or required preservation. These responsibilities also included refuelling and cleaning the reactor, capability updates involving upgrades or additions to the likes of weapons systems, sensors or communications equipment. These items all involved massive work packages, with the boat essentially stripped out and the structure of the vessel cleaned. According to David Corbett, Project Manager at Rosyth from 1988-1993, refuelling the Polaris propulsion system required cutting a hole in the pressure hull, through which the onboard reactor's fuel rods could be withdrawn and replaced. This was a highly complex procedure that required considerable work both in advance, and after the actual act of re-fuelling.<sup>11</sup> In addition

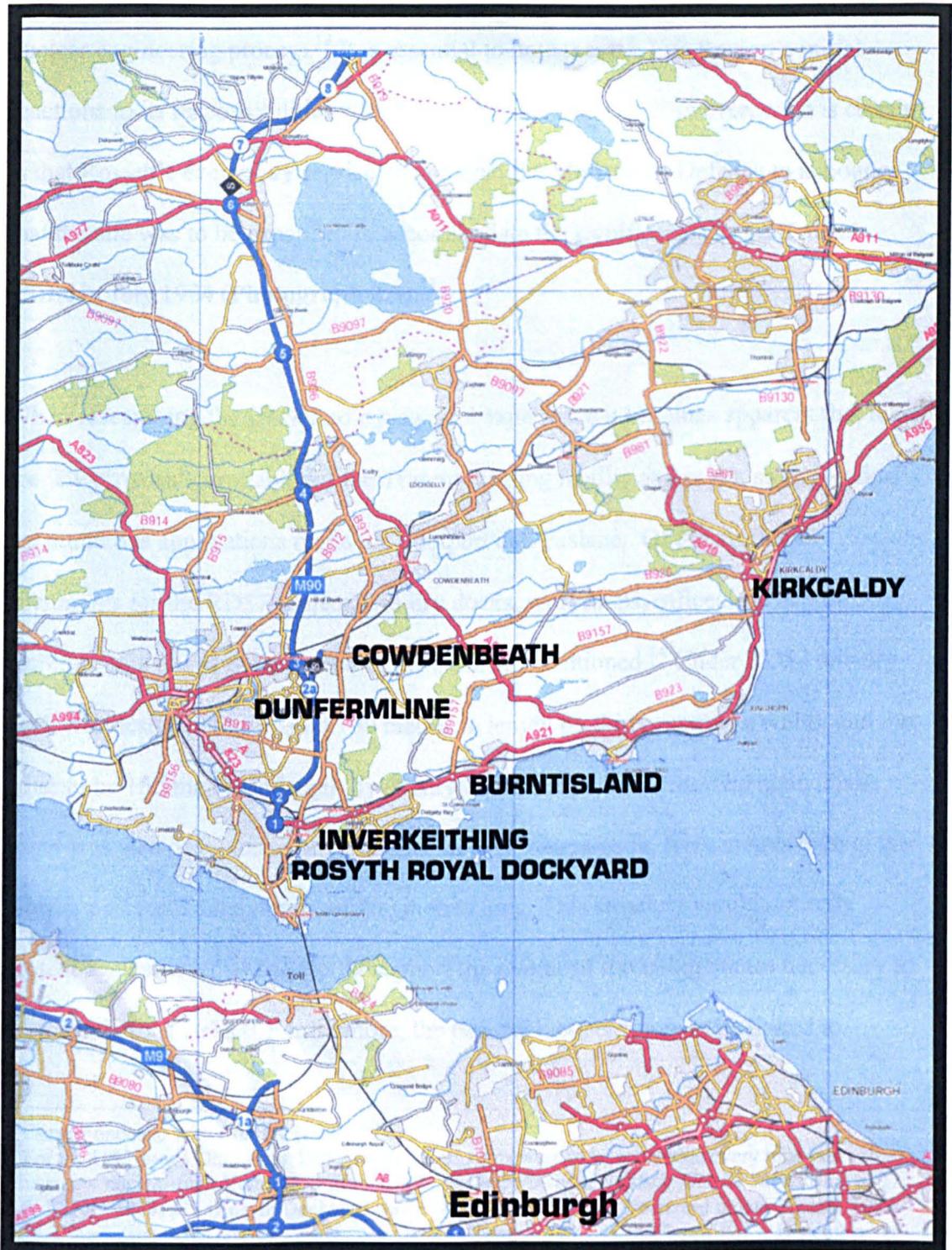
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<sup>9</sup> The Base, HMS *Cochrane*, was initially referred to as Lochinvar; the date when its name was changed is unclear.

<sup>10</sup> RSCO Fife Regional Council, Dunfermline District Council, Kirkcaldy District Council and North East Fife District Council, *Rosyth 91: The Implications*, (January 1991), p.2.

<sup>11</sup> A reactor was most 'dangerous' when its fuel is at the end of its service life due to the nature of the physics of fusion. There is considerable work to be done to bring decay heat under control, and

**Map 2.1: Communities in proximity to the Dockyard**



chemically clean the plant before it can be opened. Correspondence with David Corbett, Project Manager at Rosyth Royal Dockyard, (20/06/03).

to the work on the vessel itself, there were extensive requirements for workshop and support facilities that included the capability to support traditional mechanical, electrical, and structural engineering, along with specialised facilities to support the nuclear engineering process.<sup>12</sup> It is essential to note that the Fife Region's initial reactions to its responsibilities with Polaris remain unclear. However, what is certain is that Rosyth's exemplary service encouraged the Ministry of Defence to announce that the site was to be expanded to accommodate the significantly larger Trident SSBN in July 1984 (**Photograph 2.3**).<sup>13</sup>

When researching the Dockyard's historical experience it becomes apparent that there are few proposals available for the Trident refitting facility at Rosyth, as opposed to the numerous applications made for Coulport and Faslane. Of the available documents for the RD57 project, two dry docks, workshops, offices and support facilities on a site at the west end of the Base are mentioned.<sup>14</sup> Under RD57 one dry dock was designed to measure 190 metres in length by thirty metres in width, and the other to be 150 metres in length by twenty-eight metres in width. The main dock cover was also designed to be an estimated fifty metres wide, forty metres high at the highest point and a maximum of 200 metres long. This structure would not only protect against weather but would support the overhead travelling cranes necessary to perform various tasks.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, the two dock covers were to be linked to

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<sup>12</sup> Correspondence with Corbett, (20/06/03).

<sup>13</sup> For the US Navy's Ohio class Trident submarine, refits were to be scheduled every nine years to renew new nuclear fuel. Vonn, *How They Work: Nuclear Powered Ballistic Missile Submarine*, p. 37; *DP*, 12 July 1984, p. 1. Rosyth Dockyard was renamed Rosyth Royal Dockyard in late January 1987. DCL J. Anderson, M. Rodgers, A. Law, *An Outline History of Rosyth Dockyard Vol 1*, December 1999, p. 107.

<sup>14</sup> According to Fife Council two documents were misplaced and may have been discarded as the project was never completed. Other documents included: Property Sales Agency Defence Works (Navy) Docks and Main Works, *HM Naval Base Rosyth Nuclear Submarine Refitting Facility: Supplement to Design and Landscape Strategy*, August 1989.

<sup>15</sup> There were rumours that covers were to discourage satellite surveillance. *GH*, 2 May 1986, p. 1.

**Photograph 2.3: Entrance to Rosyth Royal Dockyard, 1978**



After July 1980 the Dockyard would receive numerous assurances from central government that this facility would perform Trident refitting and refuelling operations.

support facilities located both between and at the west end of the docks. Initial plans dictated that the complex was to be enclosed by security fences, with road and rail accesses and car parks provided. This project was thought to require fifteen hectares for the development, five hectares of which was existing Ministry of Defence land.<sup>16</sup> Support services to the complex under RD57 were also intended to involve substations, stand-by power generating facilities, a compressor house, plant rooms, a materials storage area, external plant areas and demineralised water facilities, with design and construction of the facility subject to a quality assurance programme addressing safety and reliability in all matters relating to nuclear safety.<sup>17</sup> RD46, the other major project involved with preparing the Dockyard for Trident, was far less complex.

While there was another less extensive project for the Active Waste Accumulation Facility, referred to as RD66, RD46 was a much smaller project than RD57, and consequently, less high-profile. In outline, the project was intended to prepare the entrance lock to the main basin as an emergency docking facility. Since there was to be a location that could accept nuclear-powered boats with short notice, this facility was required for support of the operational cycle of HMS *Vanguard*. This implied that it would have needed to be ready by the time the first boat was commissioned, as it was also required for support of sea trials. The scope of work for the project included construction of a docking cradle, provision of reinforced concrete pads on which to sit very large mobile cranes and backup power generators.<sup>18</sup> Transit rails

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<sup>16</sup> Ministry of Defence, *Notice of Proposed Development by the Ministry of Defence: Nuclear Submarine Refitting Facility at Rosyth Naval Base*, (Ref: DSD/NBD/750/16/86RD57, 1 May 1986).

<sup>17</sup> Ministry of Defence and Property Services Agency, *Specification Report for Proposed Rosyth Nuclear Submarine Refitting Facility*, (April 1986).

<sup>18</sup> There was also potentially a need to tie-back the dock walls for seismic qualification of the dock. Correspondence with Corbett (23/06/03).

were also to be fitted to the lock to help bring the vessel into the docking facility without colliding with the facility's walls.<sup>19</sup> There were also a number of other upgrades to support services as the reliability of power and other support utilities was very important for docking facilities because the Dockyard had to assume that the reactor would be contaminated with highly radioactive fission products. Under these circumstances, the primary coolant had to continue to be circulated for weeks in order to remove the decay heat from the reactor. Therefore, secure external power supplies that had back-ups had to be in place to run pumps and other necessary equipment, or the reactor could be damaged by the build-up of heat.<sup>20</sup> However, construction of the physical facilities was not the entire story. Trident refits were required to be undertaken in a significantly shorter time period than was the case for Polaris. Because Trident assumed responsibility for the national deterrent as Polaris was being withdrawn from service, this procedure was driven by the operational availability requirements - incoming Trident boats compared to outgoing Polaris. The need to reduce the refit time meant that management had to examine the way the Dockyard worked from all perspectives, including the facilities, the working practices, the tools and techniques.<sup>21</sup> Both these facilities were to be constructed with considerable cost to the taxpayer (**Illustration 2.1**).

The Ministry's July 1984 announcement for the Trident facility at Rosyth suggested that the cost of RD57 would initially run about £200 million.<sup>22</sup> However, by May

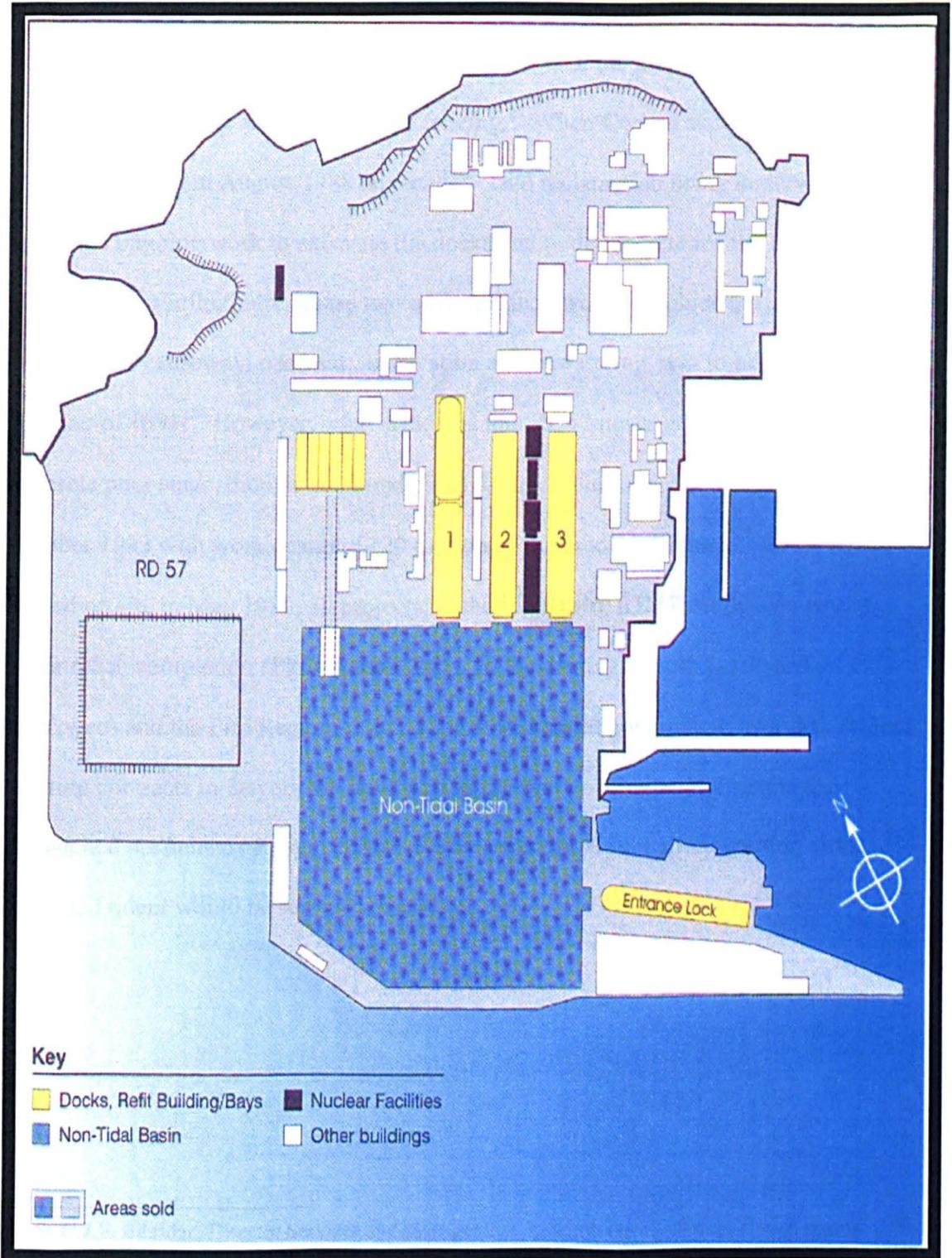
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<sup>19</sup> According to Corbett, there may also have been some secondary isolation of penstock valves (the valves that keep the drainage and flooding culverts closed). Correspondence with Corbett (23/06/03)

<sup>20</sup> A reactor that has recently been re-fuelled does not have the high fission product inventory, and therefore produces much less decay heat. Barrow-in-Furness did not have this problem because they only dealt with new reactors/ fuel. Ibid

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

**Illustration 2.1: Rosyth Royal Dockyard**



<sup>22</sup> DP, 12 July 1984, p. 1.

1986 a letter from the Ministry of Defence to George Brown, Chief Executive of Dunfermline District Council, believed the project would run closer to £220 million.<sup>23</sup> Phase one of the RD57 project began on 12 October 1987 and involved the construction of a site access from the west access road, the preparation of the contractor's working area and security fencing.<sup>24</sup> When Corbett started at Rosyth Royal Dockyard in August 1988 he recalled 'land reclamation being underway at that time, and ongoing work to excavate the docks and pour concrete for the foundation structures'.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, phase two of the project, which involved the construction of an access causeway, necessary excavation and dewatering, was to be finished in the summer of 1991.<sup>26</sup> However, what is clear is that RD57 never got past that initial concrete pour stage, though the foundations for the project were completed by October 1993 with work costing £120 million of the predicted figure.<sup>27</sup> While RD46 started on site in May 1990, all projects, including RD46, RD57 and RD66, would never reach completion (**Photograph 2.4**). To the dismay of both Dockyard employees and the Fife Region, in late June 1993 central government awarded Trident refitting contracts to Devonport Dockyard in the south of England. Despite the unmatched proficiency Rosyth employees acquired through their interaction with Polaris, Trident would be serviced elsewhere.

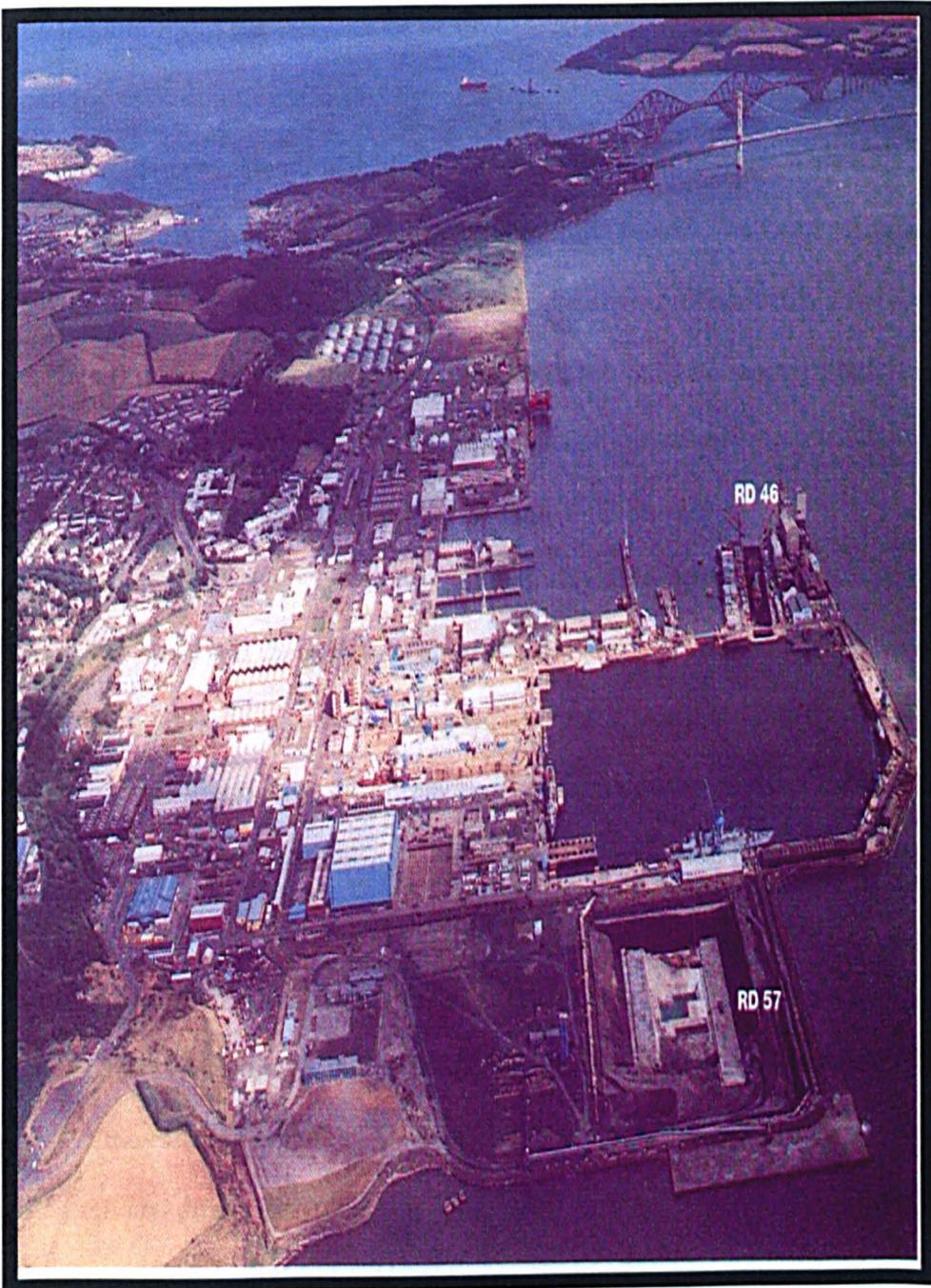
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<sup>23</sup> RSCO J.E. Ethridge, Director Services and Management, Letter to George Brown (Dunfermline Carnegie Library), 1 May 1986.

<sup>24</sup> Property Sales Agency Defence Works (Navy), *Notice of Proposed Development by the Ministry of Defence for Phase 2: Description of Works* (HM Naval Base Rosyth: Nuclear Submarine Refitting Facility, January 1988), p. 2

<sup>25</sup> Correspondence with Corbett (20/06/03)

**Photograph 2.4: Rosyth Royal Dockyard**



The entrance lock (RD46), and the large excavations that were part of the discontinued RD57 project.

<sup>26</sup> Property Sales Agency, *Ministry of Defence for Phase 2*, p. 2

<sup>27</sup> Correspondence with Corbett (20/06/03). Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p.116.

## General responses to Trident within the Fife Region

From its beginnings in the early 1900s much of Dunfermline's existence hinged on the economic opportunities afforded by the Royal Navy, and after maintaining the Polaris system over its operational lifetime surrounding communities had come to pride themselves on the services they provided to these boats. The Dockyard had served as the homeport for submarine refits after the arrival of HMS *Dreadnought* for maintenance in 1963, and by 1991 the Rosyth complex was 'the largest single industrial establishment in Scotland' with six principal operating locations employing 7,400 civilians and a further 3,800 service personnel (**Photograph 2.5**).<sup>28</sup> Similar in nature to Helensburgh, Dunfermline was very much influenced by its relationship with the Royal Navy and these figures alone did not represent the numerous military personnel that integrated into surrounding communities. Additionally, the *Dunfermline Press* highlighted the connection between community and complex by regularly featuring articles pertaining to military residents or the Royal Navy itself. Articles such as 'New man at the helm - Ahoy there!', announcing the new commanding officer of HMS *Scotis*, or 'Warriors last scrap', honouring HMS *Ulster's* final voyage to Inverkeithing's shipbreaking yard, made for common reading.<sup>29</sup> In March 1983 the establishment also received high praise from the Royal Navy for the work it completed during the Falklands War.<sup>30</sup> Bill Livingstone, Editorial Director of the paper, was certain that the community's reaction to Trident was 'generally

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<sup>28</sup> The complex also included Maritime HQ, Pitreavie, the RAF/RN Administration Centre for Scotland and Northern Ireland providing a function for search and rescue activity; RNAD Crombie, which employed 250 and Lathalmond Royal Naval Stores Depot and Admiralty Research Establishment. RSCO *Rosyth 91: The Implications*, (January 1991), p. 3.

<sup>29</sup> *DP*, 12 September 1980, p. 1; *DP*, 7 November 1980, p. 1.

<sup>30</sup> *DP*, 25 March 1983, p. 1.

Photograph 2.5: HMS Dreadnought at Rosyth Dockyard, December 1963



HMS Dreadnought was the first British nuclear powered submarine to reach Scottish waters.

favourable as it guaranteed continuity of specialist refitting jobs'.<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that improved security through Trident was also a factor. While there were those who were concerned with the radiological work hazards associated with refuelling or the storage of waste generated from this process, like the west of Scotland, there was a special bond that existed between the Royal Navy and Fife communities.

Because opposition to Trident in Fife was noticeably mild, the Conservative government could have withheld its economic indoctrination from this region. Had Trident undergone refits at Rosyth Royal Dockyard, like Polaris, all missiles and warheads would first be demated and removed from the Vanguard class at Coulport on Loch Long, with SSBNs arriving to Rosyth unarmed.<sup>32</sup> The disarmament movement's activities were therefore focused on Faslane, with headlines that read 'Nuclear debate rages on' and 'CND unfurl their banner' only intermittently appearing in the *Dunfermline Press* throughout the early 1980s.<sup>33</sup> According to Livingstone, sporadic CND protests tended to be mounted by outside activists.<sup>34</sup> John Ainslie, head administrator for the SCND, confirmed this assumption when he stated that facilities in Strathclyde had been the main focus of the movement and that any protest centred on the Dockyard usually travelled from Edinburgh.<sup>35</sup> There are yet further indicators that highlight the pallid state of opposition in Fife. Established in July 1982, the Rosyth Dockyard Workplace Branch of the Labour Party believed it was imperative to involve defence workers in creating an alternative employment

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<sup>31</sup> Correspondence with Bill Livingstone, Editorial Director of *Dunfermline Press* (19/06/03).

<sup>32</sup> The term 'demated' refers to the process of removing warheads from individual missiles.

<sup>33</sup> *DP*, 26 June 1981, p. 16; *DP*, 27 February 1981, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> Correspondence with Livingstone (19/06/03).

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Ainslie (24/06/03).

strategy to Trident, yet the inaugural meeting was only able to attract a total of roughly one dozen new members.<sup>36</sup>

Fife's initial reactions to Trident's procurement were relatively straightforward due to the region's former relationship with the SSBN, with local media again only able to provide general interpretations.<sup>37</sup> Following the government's decision to acquire the system, the Dunfermline headline read 'Missile boost for Base', expressing contentment now that 'the future of Rosyth has almost certainly been guaranteed' with the purchase of Trident.<sup>38</sup> On 2 January 1981 that same paper explained that, 'Optimism was high when Trident was announced with little doubt that Rosyth would refit'.<sup>39</sup> Finally, the *Dunfermline Press* stated in December 1984 that, 'the proposed new Trident submarine fleet will be refitted at Rosyth Dockyard...[and] with a double figure number of Polaris carrying submarine refits under its belt, was always a firm favourite'.<sup>40</sup> According to Labour MP for Dunfermline West, Rachel Squire, roughly a third of the community supported the CND line but the Dockyard had accumulated a wealth of experience with Polaris, with the majority holding the view that refitting operations at the Dockyard meant security for thousands of desperately needed jobs.<sup>41</sup> There is also strong evidence which suggests that even those not directly linked to the complex supported Trident refits at Rosyth. Just previous to the government's decision to relocate refits to Devonport in 1993, a letter addressed to Ian Lang, then Secretary of State for Scotland, from faculty at Dunfermline's Lynburn Primary

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<sup>36</sup> AF Speech from Alex Falconer, Labour MEP for Mid Scotland and Fife, *The Pursuance of Labour Party Policy, Defence and Disarmament*, 11 August 1981. AF Rosyth Dockyard Workplace Branch (Labour Party), *In-augural Meeting Notes*, 6 July 1982, (Transport House: Dunfermline).

<sup>37</sup> It should be noted that newspapers have an editorial opinion that may not concur with the views of their respective communities.

<sup>38</sup> *DP*, 18 July 1980, p. 1.

<sup>39</sup> *DP*, 2 January 1981, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> *DP*, 12 July 1984, p. 1.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Rachel Squire, Labour MP for Dunfermline West (12/05/03).

School, described their anxiety concerning the devastating effect a decision against Rosyth would have on their school.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, after the decision was announced, Rev. W.E. Farquhar of the Presbytery of Dunfermline wrote that governments as much as individuals have 'a moral duty to keep their word once it is given, and...we believe that Lord Younger's pledge should not have been broken.'<sup>43</sup> Despite the intense controversy Trident once provoked within Strathclyde, it is clear that a majority in Fife wanted the Dockyard to perform these refits.

### **Safety and the SSBN**

Refits for nuclear-powered submarines were procedures that all but rivalled the space shuttle in complexity and these were executed under the most stringent of guidelines, constantly reviewed and revised.<sup>44</sup> As has been noted, operations for Polaris were conducted at Rosyth Dockyard, with the facility also responsible for the complete removal and refuelling of both submarine and surface ship reactor cores, the X-raying of welds for potential cracks and the overhaul of hulls and all systems.<sup>45</sup> Any and all radioactive waste produced during the de-fuelling of a reactor was traditionally stored in barges, moved ashore and either remained on site or was taken by special train to British Nuclear Fuels Limited Windscale reprocessing plant.<sup>46</sup> Due to the nature of these responsibilities, it required little imagination to appreciate the concerns such operations provoked. On 31 October 1990 *The Radiological Protection of Service and Civilian Report* stated that:

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<sup>42</sup> RSCO David J. Paxton, Headteacher at Lynburn Primary School, Letter to I. Lang, Secretary of State for Scotland, 12 April 1993.

<sup>43</sup> RSCO Rev. W. E. Farquhar, Presbytery of Dunfermline, Letter to Rachel Squire, 24 June 1993.

<sup>44</sup> Safety guidelines were numerous and far too extensive to cover in great detail. The risk assessment concerning Rosyth's preparations for Trident alone required roughly 8 inches of paper. Interview with Corbett (20/06/03).

The cumulative lifetime radiation dose equivalents at Rosyth are noticeably higher than those at Devonport: 46.7 per cent of the registered radiation workers employed at Rosyth at the end of 1989 had received lifetime exposures over 50 mSv compare with only 25 per cent of the dose at Devonport. One reason for this is that the Scottish dockyard has been engaged in submarine refit operations for longer – they began at Rosyth in 1968 and at Devonport in 1980. The second reason is that Rosyth tends to refit older submarines. These tend to be more radioactive and require more maintenance, leading to higher exposures.<sup>47</sup>

While it is uncertain as to whether or not these findings acutely distressed Rosyth employees, what is clear is that a report in May 1990 suggesting the possibility of a link between childhood leukemia and Sellafield employees inspired Gordon Brown, then Labour MP for Dunfermline East, to support a comprehensive investigation into Dockyard operations.<sup>48</sup> Despite this, high safety standards at the facility offered a sense of comfort for Rosyth's employees as workers had a clear interest in these precautions due to the proximity of their families to the facility.<sup>49</sup> The same has already been implied for civilian employees at Coulport and Faslane, but to appreciate fully the weight of this statement it is essential to provide general details on the safety procedures for Polaris at Rosyth.

Safety at the Dockyard was a pervasive consideration throughout the entire refitting process. Notwithstanding the nuclear elements, submarine safety, even for

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<sup>45</sup> Norris, Burrows and Fieldhouse, *Nuclear Weapons*, p. 169.

<sup>46</sup> *Submarine*, UK Horizon, Broadcast Date: 9 September 2001.

<sup>47</sup> The International Commission on Radiological Protection recommended that no personnel should be exposed to more than fifty millieSieverts (mSv) of radiation doses per year, and expounded the principle that all doses should be as low as reasonably possible, with economic and social factors taken into account. Twelfth Report from the Defence Committee, *Radiological Protection of Service and Civilian Personnel*, Session 1989-1990, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup> It is unclear as to what transpired following this event. Sellafield, formerly Windscale, lies on the Irish Sea coast alongside England's Lake District. Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p. 111.

<sup>49</sup> Squire also addressed the question of storage of nuclear waste. According to Squire 'If nuclear subs were abandoned tomorrow we would still have waste, and there is presently nothing anyone can do about this as there is not yet a way to properly dispose of these materials. There is no one who can dispose of this material and there is no one who wants to store it. During the late 70s and early 80s retired subs were taken out to sea and dumped, this was unacceptable.' Interview with Squire (12/05/03)

conventional vessels, was treated very seriously. According to Corbett there were essentially two perspectives: safety of the vessel when it left the refit yard, meaning that the quality of the work undertaken directly affected the safety of the vessel in service; and safety during the refit process, with consideration to safety of people, the vessel, and the environment. There was an extraordinarily wide range of activity involved in a refit and the presence of nuclear engineering components had a major impact on the whole process of managing safety. Equipment used in the refitting process was also considered from a safety perspective - for example, cranes needed to be approved to perform nuclear lifts. Furthermore, only facilities licensed by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) were permitted to work on nuclear equipment, and a comprehensive safety case was required for all new facilities that demonstrated that employees were aware of the hazards, understood them, and responded accordingly.<sup>50</sup>

As a part of the Dockyard's bid for Trident, an initial safety case was prepared to show that it had confidence that it would be able to obtain an NII licence for the new facility. NII requirements were constantly upgraded, and new facilities had to comply fully with the most recent requirements. These prerequisites included the ability of the facility to withstand extremes of weather, and even seismic activity. Though of low probability the consequences of earthquakes were high if not designed for it, as radioactive materials could be released into the surrounding environment without adequate precautions.<sup>51</sup> The RD57 project was also beneficial to the environment in that it was covered. This alone brought advantages to the refit process itself in that employees would have been sheltered from the weather and also offered safety

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<sup>50</sup> Interview with Corbett (20/06/03).

benefits because there was a higher degree of environmental containment in the event of an accidental release of radiological materials.<sup>52</sup> Yet the extensive incorporation of environmental and safety procedures for all Trident projects at Rosyth were all for naught after the system's relocation to Devonport.

### **Dunfermline District Council and Fife Regional Council**

In exploring Fife's relationship with the SSBN it has been revealed that during the Polaris era Dunfermline District Council enjoyed a strong civic liaison with the Royal Navy. The many Ship Badges and Shields in the possession of the council gave adequate testimony to this. In the words of former Dunfermline Councillor Pat Callaghan, 'the relationship was polite and co-operative at all times'.<sup>53</sup> Yet it is important to note that while the Thatcher government announced its intentions to acquire Trident from the US government, Dunfermline was a member of the NFLA, and was, in principle, opposed to all forms of nuclear energy inclusive of weapons and their proliferation. Despite this predisposition, Dunfermline and Fife Councils were forced to balance anti-nuclear sentiment with economic certainties. Callaghan went on to explain that, 'we were very pragmatic about the economic disaster that could have befallen us if we opposed [Trident] too much and caused inward investment to wane in our area'. Therefore, in mitigation of Dunfermline's contradictory stance on this issue it must be accepted that Scottish local government

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<sup>51</sup> Like an SSBN suspended by the Shiplift at Faslane, refuelling operations at the Dockyard were vulnerable to seismic activity and had to be able to withstand such forces.

<sup>52</sup> Interview with Corbett (20/06/03).

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Pat Callaghan, Leader of Dunfermline District Council 1988-1992, member of Council 1984-1995 (09/07/03).

under Margaret Thatcher was, as Callaghan put it, 'a difficult furrow to plough at times'.<sup>54</sup>

Though Dunfermline and Fife councils had concerns with the refitting of the system at Rosyth, they were willing to accept any opportunities the system could provide. The onset of Trident was initially troubled by liaison and Public Relations issues as it affected Rosyth Dockyard, and in February 1986, four months previous to the release of proposals for the refit complex, Dunfermline called on the government to dispense with nuclear weapons.<sup>55</sup> After central government's acquisition of Trident, Dunfermline was led to believe that the procurement of the system was the precursor to a reduced UK defence fleet and would have an impact on other works, such as refits for Type 42 destroyers. Many believed that Trident thereby reduced Rosyth Dockyard's opportunities for essential refit over a period of years.<sup>56</sup> However, coinciding with fears of lost economic opportunities through Trident investment, safety factors related to the system were also of concern. After the release of the proposal in May 1986, by August Fife Regional Council deemed Ministry of Defence public safety plans for a potential nuclear accident as insufficient.<sup>57</sup> Though dates are unclear, at some point Dunfermline's council employed a specialist in nuclear issues inclusive of waste and contamination, which allowed the council to establish a known datum from which to base its comments and actions for the future. To ease the concerns of local government, Dockyard officials also allowed for the appropriate access, and details were shared with Rosyth Public Safety committee.<sup>58</sup> After the Fife

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<sup>54</sup> 'We maintained job and economic stability and actually increased inward investment to our area in a climate of National (Scotland) economic uncertainty.' Interview with Callaghan (09/07/03).

<sup>55</sup> Ibid; Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p. 103.

<sup>56</sup> Interview with Callaghan (09/07/03).

<sup>57</sup> Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p. 105.

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Callaghan (09/07/03).

council received assurances from the Ministry of Defence that nuclear accident contingency plans would be renewed, it held no objections to proposals for development at Rosyth by September 1986.<sup>59</sup>

Aware of the situation in the west of Scotland Dunfermline District Council was particularly attentive to matters pertaining to Trident, but Fife Regional Council's acceptance brought forward a period of renewed cooperation. In October 1986 the Chief Staff Officer at Rosyth Naval Base gave a presentation to Dunfermline councillors on the emergency procedures to be followed in the event of a nuclear accident. By January 1987 Malcolm Rifkind, Scottish Secretary of State, gave the green light for planning to start for the refitting complex.<sup>60</sup> A co-operative demeanour energised both Dunfermline and Fife councils.<sup>61</sup> Consequently, Dunfermline made no objections to the capping of asbestos-contaminated ground at Rosyth, and by September 1987 it reiterated 'their overall objection to the nature of the facility' but had no objections to the 'proposals for construction' on the site.<sup>62</sup> While both councils were familiar with the radiological characteristics of Trident, perhaps events in late 1988 revealed the most telling example of this cooperation. In August Dunfermline District Council was invited to take part in sampling radiation levels in the Dockyard as a result of the Ministry's new 'open policy', and by September Fife's local

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<sup>59</sup> In January 1986 it was also reported that Fife Regional Council would be closely involved in discussions with the Ministry of Defence on the expansion programme for Trident. *DP*, 7 January 1986, p. 7. During a special meeting of the Planning Committee, Fife Council stated that 'Ministry of Defence be informed that this Council has no objection to their proposed nuclear submarine refit complex', subject to agreeing to observe conditions and agreements. Furthermore, the MoD was to undertake measures to reduce or eliminate radioactive discharges from the Dockyard, have the Rosyth Public Safety Scheme undertaken by the Nuclear Submarine Refit Complex Liason Committee in conjunction with local and naval authorities, and prior to construction starting on site a set of noise levels shall be taken to check the existing surveys. DCL Dunfermline District Council Meeting, *Index to Minutes*, September/October 1986, p. 529-532.

<sup>60</sup> Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p. 107.

<sup>61</sup> While unclear, Fife councils most likely understood the futility of resistance after witnessing the experiences of Strathclyde councils.

<sup>62</sup> DCL Dunfermline District Council Meeting, *Index to Minutes*, September/October 1987, p. 631.

authorities raised no objections to a nuclear waste store at Rosyth in connection with the Trident complex.<sup>63</sup> While co-operation with the Ministry of Defence was imposed upon Dumbarton district councillors at that time, a staggering rate of unemployment and the inevitability of Trident encouraged local government in Fife to be far more accommodating. This had no influence over the final outcome.

Central government's unexpected decision to sponsor an industrial competition for refits between Rosyth and Devonport Dockyards in September 1992 was interpreted by Dunfermline and Fife councils as an unexpected breach of faith.<sup>64</sup> Both had already launched a campaign to defend jobs at HMS *Cochrane* in December 1990 after the Scottish media suggested that the Base was to be closed, and local authorities did likewise for the adjacent Dockyard.<sup>65</sup> According to Callaghan, major cities were expanding in UK economic terms but peripheral economies, such as Dunfermline, were still struggling.<sup>66</sup> With its high rate of unemployment, the region was prepared to fight for Trident refits. Fife local authorities therefore supported the case that was being made by Dockyard management at Rosyth, and Fife Regional Council argued that:

The impeccable track record of the Rosyth workforce in submarine refit work, the technical expertise assembled at the Dockyard, a series of past Government commitments and the very significant part of the investment for the Trident refit facility already made at Rosyth should have made a decision on the issue beyond doubt.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Dunfermline formally objected to this project in February 1989 but this issue was resolved. Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p. 109-110

<sup>64</sup> The September 1992 date was revealed during an interview with Squire (12/05/03).

<sup>65</sup> A Campaign Core Group focused the argument for the Base on long-term economic and strategic issues judged against assumed short-term financial gain. RSCO Fife Regional Council in conjunction with RSCO Dunfermline District Council, The Fraser of Allander Institute and St. Andrews Economic Services, *Rosyth: A Report Prepared by Fife Regional Council*, November 1992, p. 1.3; Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p. 113.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Callaghan (09/07/03).

<sup>67</sup> *Rosyth: A Report Prepared by Fife Regional Council*, p. 1.3.

Economically, Dunfermline council and the people it represented simply could not afford the loss of this opportunity and lobbied the government and associated trade unions to overturn 'this shabby deceit'.<sup>68</sup> These attempts proved futile. Despite a monumental effort on the part of the community, its political representation and Dockyard management, Trident refits were allocated to the south of England. In response to this, Dunfermline council reacted angrily by immediately declaring that without refitting work no support could be given for decommissioning submarines at Rosyth.<sup>69</sup> In July 1993, roughly one month after the controversial action, Fife assembled a memorandum of evidence that vigorously challenged the government's decision-making process and commitments on future refitting workloads. Councils also reiterated the economic implications of the decision on Rosyth and Fife.<sup>70</sup> However, it was not to be. Though Dunfermline and Fife councillors lobbied Parliament in its attempts to retain Trident refits, 'the general mood proved to be one of despondency'.<sup>71</sup>

### **Fife economy and unemployment**

Despite the Fife yard's considerable experience with refitting nuclear submarines, during the 1980s unemployment in the region was rampant with local economies fragile and enfeebled. Polaris failed to invigorate the Fife economy, and many communities surrounding the Dockyard were areas of urban deprivation. Similar to the situation in Dumbarton, Dunfermline had 3,134 unemployed in July 1979, 2,970

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<sup>68</sup> Interview with Callaghan (09/07/03).

<sup>69</sup> DCL Dunfermline District Council Meeting, *Index to Minutes*, June/July 1993, p. 254.

<sup>70</sup> Having analysed the proposals in three different areas, Council believed the proposals should have been viewed as a single package of measures - failure in one element cast serious doubts as a whole. *Rosyth: A Report Prepared by Fife Regional Council*, p. 1.

<sup>71</sup> Interview with Callaghan (09/07/03).

jobless in July 1980 and over 3,500 unemployed by August of that year.<sup>72</sup> In January 1981 massive job losses from the coal industry placed a severe strain on the local economy, offering only lean times for many of Fife's families.<sup>73</sup> With companies like the American owned Trane-Ltd. prepared to lay off a majority of its employees that year, it was not uncommon for local headlines to read 'Regions youth unemployment "out of control"' or '890 chase four jobs'.<sup>74</sup> In February the district had roughly 5,900 unemployed, with the male unemployment for Dunfermline and Inverkeithing at 8.1 per cent and an astonishing 20.4 per cent at Cowdenbeath.<sup>75</sup> Because Fife communities gradually came to rely on the defence industry, Alex Falconer, former Labour MEP for Mid Scotland and Fife, explained that by July 1982 the Rosyth Dockyard Workplace Branch of the Labour Party, a left-wing shop steward movement, offered employees courses to develop policies for an alternative economic strategy.<sup>76</sup> Little came from this with the economic situation failing to improve. By late March 1983 Dunfermline district had nearly 7,500 unemployed and it was the Rosyth complex that single-handedly shielded the region from further economic disparity.<sup>77</sup> Between 1973-1984 Polaris refitting at the Dockyard provided for 1,751 apprenticeships in the Fife region alone, and at the end of 1984 civilian employment

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<sup>72</sup> DP, 1 August 1980, p. 5.

<sup>73</sup> At the industry's peak, in the 1920s, some 27,500 people were employed by the coal companies - a quarter of the Fife workforce. By the 1970s, 65 per cent of the coal was mined in Scotland's dozen or so remaining collieries. See R.S. Halliday, *The disappearing Scottish colliery: a personal view of some aspects of Scotland's coal industry since nationalisation* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press), 1990.

<sup>74</sup> Trane Ltd produced air conditioning, ventilation and heat transfer equipment. DP, 16 January 1981, p. 1; DP, 16 January 1981, p. 7; DP, 18 September 1981, p. 1.

<sup>75</sup> DP, 27 February 1981, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> The Branch composed an Economic Impact Survey, and as a result, the results were based on 775 forms from workers in Rosyth Naval Base and RNAD Crombie. There were 130 forms returned by RNAD Crombie and 522 from Rosyth Naval Base. Amongst a number of findings, results mentioned that forty-four per cent of households were solely dependent on Rosyth for their income, thirty-five per cent depended upon a single pay packet from Rosyth, and fourteen per cent of households faced multiple redundancies at Rosyth. AF Defence Combine News - Newsletter of Fife, Perth and Kinross Defence Workers Combine, *Results of Defence Survey Released*, (Inverkeithing: Fife, Perth and Kinross Defence Combine Committee, no date), p. 2; Interview with Alex Falconer, former Labour MEP for Mid Scotland and Fife (16/06/03).

<sup>77</sup> DP, 25 March 1983, p. 7.

at the complex represented up to 25 per cent of all employment in the Dunfermline Employment Office area with 83 per cent of all employees from Dunfermline district and 93 per cent from within Fife.<sup>78</sup> Through a combination of refitting experience and economic necessity, many considered Malcolm Rifkind's May 1987 announcement that 1,000 construction jobs would be necessary for the new submarine complex at Rosyth a 'well-deserved' victory.<sup>79</sup>

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the implications of peace threatened the certainty of Trident refits remaining at Rosyth with many in Fife becoming all too aware of the connection between Base and Dockyard. Appreciation for the naval complex was also compounded by overall economic conditions throughout the country, as Scottish historian Christopher Harvie noted that:

By 1990 the heavy industries had dwindled to only three shipyards on the Clyde, collieries at Longannet and Monktonhall, and the threatened steelworks complex around Ravenscraig. Mechanical engineering output alone slumped by 28 per cent between 1979-1985. The Silicon Glen phenomenon, instead of achieving the 'critical mass which would generate high value-added concerns, obeyed the policies of the multinationals which controlled it and slowed up; textiles and whisky were in trouble; and manufacturing (including energy production) was down to less than thirty per cent of GNP, employment dropping from 605,000 in 1979 to 412,000 in 1986, and investment falling two-fifths, from £561 to £339 million.<sup>80</sup>

With nowhere to turn the Dockyard's civilian employees naturally hoped to avoid the economic difficulties of the outside world. While the complex still provided a major

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<sup>78</sup> Rifkind was the Secretary of State for Scotland at that time. Devonport Dockyard in Plymouth created 2,863 apprenticeships during 1984. Twenty-second Report from the Committee of Public Accounts, *Control of Dockyard Operations and Manpower* (London: HMSO), HC 342 of Session 1983-84, p. 32; RSCO Rosyth Naval Base Trade Union, *Giving the Royal Dockyards a Chance: a consultative document for government, the community management and unions*, December 1984, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> *DP*, 22 May 1987, p. 1; *DP*, 12 July 1984, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 165.

economic impact to Dunfermline and Fife in January 1991, at this time it only accounted for 17 per cent of all employees in Dunfermline district with roughly 85 per cent of all employees living in Fife.<sup>81</sup> Yet in July of that year Babcock Thorn Limited, the Dockyard's management, announced 500 job losses with the government also stating that 800 civilian jobs and 1,200 Royal Navy personnel were to depart from HMS *Cochrane* by January 1992.<sup>82</sup> If all civilian jobs related to the complex were lost, it was projected that unemployment in the district would rise from an already high 9.4 per cent to well over 20 per cent.<sup>83</sup>

These conditions pushed some workers to begin considering employment alternatives to that of the SSBN, and by late 1992 it was reported that a 'promising' post-Cold War experiment in diversification of the military-industrial plant was underway to assist in developing civil business work.<sup>84</sup> From a Scottish perspective, Rosyth trade unions believed the relocation of refitting would lead to closure of the Dockyard and discourage procurement agencies who sought contractors capable of 'conceiving, designing, building, repairing and refitting, updating and upgrading their warships i.e. offering one-stop shopping' that was available in Scotland.<sup>85</sup> Following the departure of civilian jobs from the Base the local unemployment rate shot upwards to 11.8 per cent by November 1992, accentuating the importance of Trident refits to Fife communities.<sup>86</sup> For Dockyard employees the economic climate was inescapable, with viable employment alternatives largely unavailable.

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<sup>81</sup> This was a decrease in employment from 1984. *Rosyth 91: The Implications*, p. 3.

<sup>82</sup> For convenience Babcock Thorn Ltd will be referred to as Babcock from this point. Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p.115.

<sup>83</sup> *Rosyth 91: The Implications*, p. 3.

<sup>84</sup> There are numerous discrepancies in employment figures, probably attributed to stressing the importance of refitting work at Fife. RSCO D.Greenwood, *The Dockyard Question: Issues and Options - A Report prepared for the Rosyth Trade Unions*, November 1992, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> *TS*, 20 November 1992, p. 8.

Civilian employees pressed to avoid defence cuts in the post-Cold War era as the potential impact of Trident to Fife's local economies became increasingly evident during the final months of the refit competition. According to the regional council, in November 1992 the impact of HMS *Cochrane* and Rosyth Dockyard on the Scottish economy was estimated to be of the order of £380 million per annum, equating to more than 14,000 jobs. Jobs related to the complex were worth around £220 million to the local economy, representing almost 10 per cent of the regional Gross Domestic Product. During the 1991/92 financial year Fife council stated that an average of 4,484 persons were directly employed at the Dockyard and the total 'spend' of the establishment on wages, materials, goods and services was roughly £169 million, £124 million of that being spent within Scotland. Should both the Base and the Dockyard be run-down, estimates suggested some 18,000 people in total would be affected.<sup>87</sup> Described efficiently within the *Independent on Sunday*, it was stated that:

With only 4,000 at Rosyth and 5,000 at Devonport, their economic importance nationally may have been diluted, but to the local economies they served, they remained crucial. Like Linwood and Ravensraig before it, Rosyth had become a national symbol of Scottish industry... Waiting for the MoD to deliver its judgement would not be easy. For many, it was hoped that their children would have something still there for them.<sup>88</sup>

Over the course of twenty-five years Fife's coal industry expired and the area became highly dependent on SSBN refits, yet this involvement did not shelter the region from abject poverty. By April 1993 45.5 per cent of those children at Lynburn Primary School in Dunfermline were in receipt of free school meals.<sup>89</sup> This high percentage reflected the state of the local economy. Yet the far-reaching implications of relocation were also made apparent when Rosyth's commercial management,

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<sup>87</sup> *Rosyth: A Report Prepared by Fife Regional Council*, p. 3-12.

<sup>88</sup> *The Independent on Sunday*, 3 January 1993, p. 22.

Babcock International, announced 450 redundancies at its Renfrew works near Glasgow in May 1993 and warned of 'thousands' more job losses if it did not receive Trident refits.<sup>90</sup> When the Conservative government opted to transfer refitting facilities to Plymouth, the psychological and socio-economic impact to Fife and other regions would prove to be nothing less than devastating.

The force of this decision was felt immediately and Fife communities responded in the negative. Following the announcement that refits were to be directed south, Rifkind provoked further distress when he declared that 450 jobs at Rosyth would be terminated immediately, though Babcock believed up to 1,000 jobs would be lost in the wake of the Devonport decision.<sup>91</sup> As compensation for the loss, central government guaranteed surface vessel refit work extending over twelve years but few in Fife were prepared to accept more promises.<sup>92</sup> Amidst this intensified atmosphere there were predictions that roughly 2,500 redundancies would be created over Rifkind's more conservative estimate. Jack Dromey, national secretary for the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU), went as far as accusing the Conservative Party of placing political motivations above national interests.<sup>93</sup> There were an increasing number of residents who also believed that if Trident refits were to be performed elsewhere then retired nuclear-powered boats could find sanctuary somewhere other than Rosyth. According to a Fife memorandum, the concept of continued basing of the strategic nuclear deterrent in Scotland was directly related to promises that the refitting of the Trident vessels would be at Rosyth. Consistent with

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<sup>89</sup> David J. Paxton, Letter to I. Lang, April 1993.

<sup>90</sup> *TG*, 28 May 1993, p. 19.

<sup>91</sup> 350 jobs were also lost at Devonport. *TI*, 25 June 1993, p. 8.

<sup>92</sup> *Rosyth: Memorandum of evidence from Fife Regional Council*, p. 3.

<sup>93</sup> *Rosyth Dockyard*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 227 Col 236, 24 June 1993; *DP*, 2 July 1993, p. 13.

this initial reaction, by the late 1990s the scrapping of decommissioned submarines at the Dockyard became an intense political issue in Fife (**Photograph 2.6**).<sup>94</sup> With Fife's economic future left uncertain civilian employees were forced to rely on government assurances.

After 1993 the Dockyard did continue to refit surface ships, though at a noticeably reduced level. By late July 1995 property consultants handling the sale of HMS *Cochrane* received several bids while the Dockyard announced a £27 million contract to carry out a major refit of HMS *Newcastle*, £10 million of work on HMS *Coventry* and a £16 million order to refit HMS *Dumbarton Castle*.<sup>95</sup> Though these refit orders were significant they were simply not enough. The decision to relocate Trident refits devastated Fife's communities, and though exact figures are still unclear the agreed figure came to roughly 10,000 job losses.<sup>96</sup> Several thousand indirect job losses were linked to local businesses in Dunfermline, there was no alternative submarine work available and valuable economic and human resources were ultimately squandered. Like many communities in Fife, Dunfermline's identity was with Rosyth Royal Dockyard as the community gradually became what was described as 'a wasteland' after 1993. It would be years before the future of the complex was secured by the

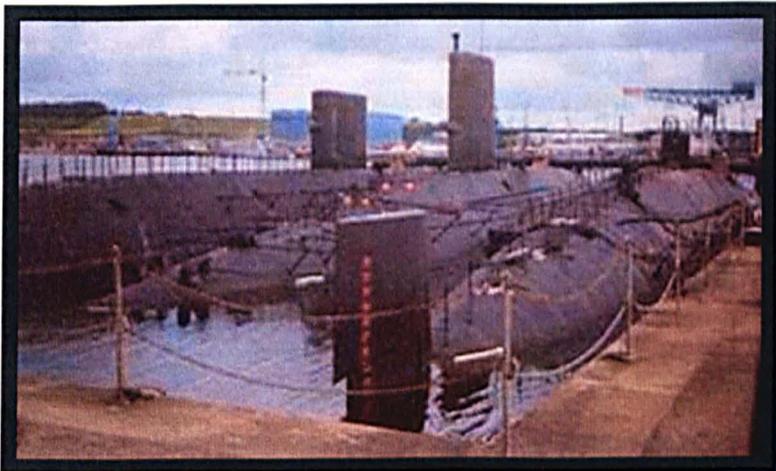
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<sup>94</sup> *Rosyth: Memorandum of evidence from Fife Regional Council*, p. 5. According to the SNP, what Scots were now being asked to 'stomach' was being used for the continual basing of nuclear weapons by a Government which had reneged on the other part of the bargain, and now appeared to be unable firmly to guarantee surface ship refitting in its stead. Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, *The Royal Dockyards*, (London: HMSO), HC 829 of Session 1992-93, 22 July 1993, p. 71.

<sup>95</sup> *TS*, 28 July 1995, p. 6; *TG*, 25 July 1995, p. 16.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Squire (12/05/03). Events proved that Devonport was the more expensive option, as Rosyth had already laid down a seismically-proved foundation for the Trident refit bay, at great public expense, and Devonport spent years trying to pile-drive foundations through geologically unsuitable strata. It was an illogical transposition because 'it placed nuclear refitting at a yard with a background in surface ship refitting and transferred core surface-ship work to a yard with a track record in refitting the nation's nuclear deterrent'. Interview with Livingstone (19/06/03).

**Photograph 2.6: Decommissioned submarines at Rosyth Royal Dockyard**



Dockyard's proximity to the fast-expanding high tech and corporate business communities of Dunfermline's bridgehead area.<sup>97</sup>

### **Industrial competition for Trident**

For a decade employees of the Dockyard and residents of Fife were assured that Trident refits were to be performed at the complex, leading communities in the area to prepare psychologically for the upcoming task while planning for their economic futures. After the government's intentions for Trident were announced in July 1980, Rosyth received confirmation of its responsibilities in December 1984 through John Stanley, Armed Forces Minister.<sup>98</sup> In July 1985 Stanley once again stressed that the Thatcher government had made an undertaking for the refitting of SSBNs to be continued at Rosyth Dockyard.<sup>99</sup> By early May 1986 the government's objectives must have appeared unquestionable as the Ministry's proposals for the refitting facility at Rosyth were circulated throughout Fife local government. Furthermore, as late as 1991 construction of the RD57 project was progressing well as the Defence Committee reported that:

It is still the Government's intention that Trident refitting and refuelling procedures should take place at Rosyth, and work on the RD57 programme is being continued because 'it is the only current programme which assures that we will meet Trident refit dates' In these circumstances, it seems likely that the refitting and refuelling facility will go ahead as originally planned.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Babcock International, which had taken over management of the facility in 1987, acquired it in 1997, making the Rosyth Royal Dockyard the first privatised dockyard in Britain. Interview with Squire (12/05/03).

<sup>98</sup> *DP*, 12 July 1984, p. 1.

<sup>99</sup> *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 82 Col 169, 12 July 1985.

<sup>100</sup> Eighth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, (London: HMSO) HC 286 of Session 1990-1991, p. 23.

However, complications surfaced in February of that year when HMS *Cochrane* appeared on the closure list after the *Options for Change* review confirmed that the necessity of present bases was under consideration.<sup>101</sup> This factor held serious implications for the Dockyard.

With HMS *Cochrane* under serious threat, management at Devonport Dockyard in Plymouth intended to exploit the situation in Rosyth. In 1991 the potential conclusion of the Base was being viewed more and more as a Scottish issue, with the Campaign Core Group formed and representing the interests of communities through local authorities, Members of Parliament and the trade unions.<sup>102</sup> However, reductions in defence spending during the early 1990s came with rapidity, and defence workers everywhere were all too often unprepared for the deceleration brought about by the subtle nature of the post-Cold War peace.<sup>103</sup> By January 1992 the government did give a commitment to the continued operation of the Base, albeit at a reduced level, with Type 42 frigates and numerous service personnel to be redeployed to Portsmouth. Interpreted as a sign of things to come, Fife and Dunfermline councils believed that the outcome of considerations by central government would decide the future of both the Dockyard and the Base.<sup>104</sup> These assumptions proved correct, and Devonport Management Limited (DML) sought to create an opportunity within the competitive post-Cold War market. After the English Dockyard made an unsolicited bid to refit Trident in July 1991, and went as far as arguing for a one dockyard solution, a fierce campaign got underway between DML and Babcock

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<sup>101</sup> Despite its reduced continuation after 1991, the Base would be closed by 1996. The Trident refitting complex was considered exempt and the Ministry of Defence 'could safely proceed with its programme'. Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>102</sup> RSCO Core Campaign Group, *Rosyth 91: Rosyth Naval Base- The Economic and Social Issues*, p. 5.

<sup>103</sup> I. Clark, *The Post-Cold War Order*, p. 31.

(Map 2.2).<sup>105</sup> By January 1992 the Trident contract became a national issue in Scotland, and during parliamentary recess in September of that year the Major government formally announced that an industrial competition for refits would take place between the two yards.<sup>106</sup> Despite Rosyth's vast experience with Polaris, the multiple commitments made to Rosyth and initial construction of the RD57 project, previous assurances made to the Dockyard proved meaningless.

Both yards were desperate to obtain, or in Rosyth's case, retain, Trident refit operations, with local economies for both regions presenting strong cases for the pursuit of such responsibilities. Under the provisions of the Dockyard Services Act 1986, both Rosyth Dockyard in Fife and Devonport Dockyard in Plymouth had been transferred from Ministry of Defence supervision to commercial management on 6 April 1987.<sup>107</sup> Rosyth Royal Dockyard was a joint venture company owned by Babcock Thorn Limited, with Babcock the majority and Thorn the minority shareholder, heavily dependent on naval refitting but commercial work steadily increasing after privatisation. The Dockyard was one of the largest industrial

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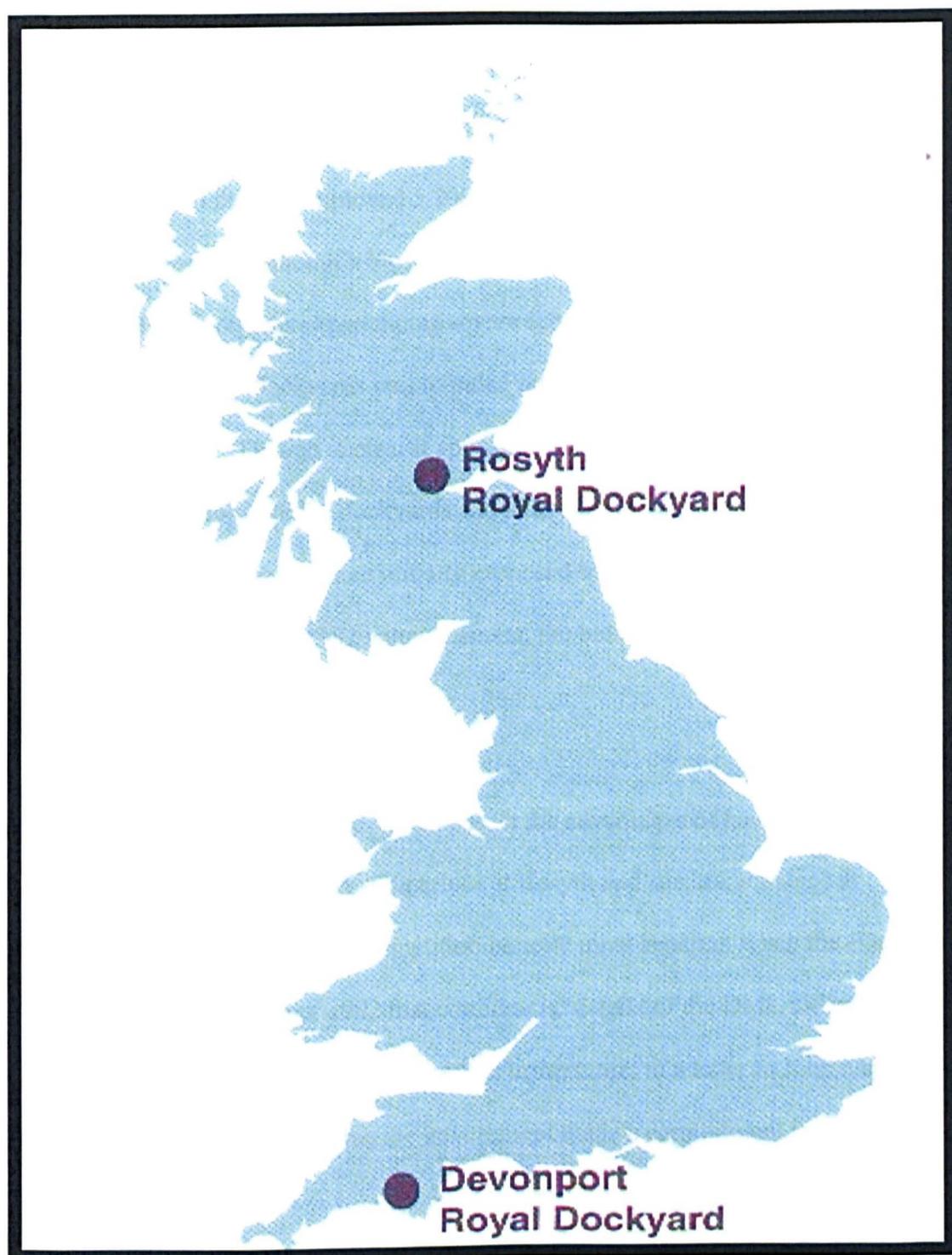
<sup>104</sup> RSCO Fife Regional Council in conjunction with Dunfermline District Council, *Rosyth: A Report Prepared by Fife Regional Council*, p. 1.1.

<sup>105</sup> Babcock argued that Rosyth had made progress with RD57 and met all current nuclear safety constraints, which included the latest earthquake prediction levels. By December 1991 Babcock approached the Ministry of Defence with a view to buying the Dockyard outright. Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, pp.114-115.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, p.114. This was completed at a time where there was probably planning by the Conservatives to do this at a time most convenient for their intentions. The suggestion and September date is according to the Labour MP. Interview with Squire (12/05/03).

<sup>107</sup> See Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region. The Dockyard Services Bill was eventually cleared through Parliament with Babcock Thorn Ltd and DML appointed in January and February 1987 respectively. Report by the Comptroller and the Auditor General, *Transfer of the Royal Dockyard to Commercial Management*, (London: HMSO, 3 March 1988), pp. 1,5.

Map 2.2: Rosyth and Devonport Dockyards



establishments in Scotland, and by November 1992 employed an estimated 4,200.<sup>108</sup> Since 1987 1,045 jobs were lost, local unemployment was at a staggering 11.8 per cent and some £120 million in construction had already taken place on the RD57 project.<sup>109</sup> DML's primary function was to support the Royal Navy and Devonport Dockyard was the largest marine support complex in Western Europe. In November 1992 the southern facility employed 5,200, it had already lost an astounding 5,949 jobs since 1987 and Plymouth's local unemployment rate matched Fife at 11.4 per cent.<sup>110</sup> With both regions experiencing severe economic hardship, the government's decision to retain two dockyards was founded on the perceived value of ensuring viable competition. Though unclear it appears Rosyth's management anticipated the government's strategy for the dockyards and announced plans for a substantially cheaper Trident refit facility than initially proposed by the Ministry of Defence.<sup>111</sup> Previous to the September 1992 announcement, the bidding war had in fact already begun.

While a study produced by Babcock broadcast the advantages of having two yards under single management, with submarines at Rosyth and surface warships at Devonport, the intensity of the competition became most apparent when the *Financial Times* reported in December 1992 that confidential details of the DML bid had been clandestinely passed to the Scottish yard.<sup>112</sup> Furthermore, in a letter to John Major, Rachel Squire re-emphasised that the government made a commitment to Rosyth in

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<sup>108</sup> *TS*, 20 November 1992, p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Devonport Dockyard*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 210 Col 263-269, 25 June 1992.

<sup>111</sup> Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, *The Royal Dockyards*, (London: HMSO), HC 829 of Session 1992-93, 22 July 1993, p. 8; *FT*, 23 June 1992, p. 3.

<sup>112</sup> *FT*, 18 November 1992, p. 8; *FT*, 11 December 1992, p. 10.

1985, and that refitting work would take place there.<sup>113</sup> Management at Rosyth believed it had assembled an excellent financial and strategic case for maintaining the refit facility in Fife, and released a glossy document to the Ministry of Defence that argued:

Devonport presently carries out by far the greater volume of large surface ship refitting work. If Devonport were to be awarded the submarine work in addition, it would have the capacity and financial strength to undercut Rosyth's prices...By contrast, if Rosyth was awarded the submarine contract, both dockyards would have a substantial future.<sup>114</sup>

Rather than adopting an aggressive take-over strategy, it was clear that Rosyth management somehow believed it was at a distinct disadvantage, opting to employ a more pragmatic approach toward refits.<sup>115</sup>

Babcock promptly reacted to this precarious situation and pushed forward with a series of revised proposals. It was reported that the Ministry of Defence RD57 scheme would have cost taxpayers £500 million but Babcock felt it could complete the task for £267 million by omitting the covered dockyard and employing a high level crane with a new low level fuel handling system with relocation of both nuclear and non-nuclear buildings and services. In summary, the new RD57 proposal was expected to reduce capital cost; maintain the required completion date; conform to stringent nuclear safety requirements; reduce refitting costs and integrate and build on the RD57 site work already performed.<sup>116</sup> At one point Babcock even looked at treating the project as a completely new site so that management could change the

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<sup>113</sup> RSCO Rachel Squire, Labour MP for Dunfermline West, Letter to Rt Hon John Major, 2 December 1992, (Rachel Squire Constituency Office).

<sup>114</sup> RSCO Rosyth Royal Dockyard, *Trident nuclear submarine refitting at Rosyth offers the better solution*, (Babcock Thorn Limited: No Date), p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> This strategy was most likely adopted due to the situation with HMS *Cochrane*.

employment conditions for employees in order to support the changes to working practices the Dockyard needed to implement. Once Babcock's project management teams approached the Ministry of Defence with their intentions, and it became apparent that there was a genuine interest, the level of involvement escalated dramatically.<sup>117</sup>

Corbett explained that management had a team of roughly fifty employees working on the bid, which included the entire board of executive directors and senior operational managers in the company. Babcock ultimately produced a comprehensive package of documentation that made clear their objectives, including what the Dockyard would do, how it would do it, what was required, how much it would cost, its impact to the community and the draft safety case. The risk assessment itself was so thorough that it required roughly eight inches of paper, a collection of summary documents were professionally produced and a similar set of documents were released for the workforce to explain what was happening.<sup>118</sup> Nonetheless, by 1993 the situation between the two yards had noticeably intensified when in mid-February Malcolm Rifkind, now Secretary of State for Defence, suspended a decision on which dockyard would be awarded the lifeline contract to refit Trident.<sup>119</sup>

A new timetable was announced in March 1993 due to the need for the government to be 'even handed', and when DML submitted a bid £64 million lower than Rosyth, Babcock reviewed the requirements for RD57 and started the process of

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<sup>116</sup> RSCO Rosyth Royal Dockyard, *RD57 New Docks Proposal* (Babcock Thorn Ltd; no date), p. 1,4.

<sup>117</sup> Interview with Corbett (20/06/03).

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Corbett (20/06/03). In November 1992 DML proposed a dual site, single management structure and claimed it could save the Government 400 million. Rosyth stated these claims were half-truths and inaccuracies and that Rosyth could save the Government £500 million over fifteen years. Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p.116.

simplification.<sup>120</sup> Management went through this cycle a number of times, each time responding to further cost reductions from Devonport. The management team for Rosyth had very little confidence that DML could actually upgrade its facilities for the money they were proposing, and Rosyth had been studying the planning of Trident refits for years before it reached this point.<sup>121</sup> Despite all this, at the request of the Ministry of Defence Babcock submitted their final proposal in mid June 1993 that sliced an estimated £70 million off its previous offer. According to Corbett, it was the growing realisation that Babcock could reduce the refit times significantly, and also reduce costs, which led the company to suggest that it had the ability to move to a single site capable of refitting the entire nuclear fleet.<sup>122</sup> The final proposal offered by Babcock argued that Rosyth could accommodate from an early date the refitting, repair and decommissioning programme for all nuclear submarines with some dockings conducted at Faslane. Substantial work had already been completed on the preparation of a nuclear safety case for the new facilities, and Babcock was prepared to negotiate the acquisition of existing dockyard assets, participate in the funding of Low Cost RD57 and manage the implementation of the project.<sup>123</sup> Besides parking nuclear submarines at Rosyth Dockyard, all refuelling work, including the removal and replacement of radioactive materials, could be successfully completed in an upgraded facility.<sup>124</sup> For reasons yet to be revealed, the Ministry of Defence, senior naval officials and central government ultimately disregarded this last proposal.

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<sup>119</sup> *TG*, 10 February 1993, p. 1.

<sup>120</sup> The Devonport bid put its capital cost at £236 million. Anderson, Rodgers, Law, *An Outline History*, p.116. Interview with Corbett (20/06/03).

<sup>121</sup> Babcock knew 'far more about the implications of Trident than did DML'. Interview with Corbett (20/06/03).

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup> Low Cost RD57 was Babcock's proposal for £267 million.

<sup>124</sup> RSCO Rosyth Royal Dockyard, *No Title* (Babcock Thorn Ltd; no date).

The men and women of the Fife yard were distraught by the government's decision to relocate Trident refits to Plymouth. Releasing waves of bitter resentment, accusations of deceit and industrial protest, on 24 June 1993 Rifkind announced that the £5 billion in refit contracts would be allocated to DML because its proposal for upgrading docks and running costs undercut Rosyth's bid by some £64 million. The results of the analysis for capital costs showed that the proposal to build new docks at Rosyth cost some £369 million on top of the £100 million already spent. The proposals for the upgrading of docks in Rosyth would cost £248 million, and the proposals for Devonport would cost roughly £236 million in total. Regardless of funds already spent, Rifkind believed the RD57 project was more expensive than other proposals. Bids were much closer in capital cost, but there was a difference in Devonport's favour of £12 million. With regard to operating costs, Rifkind's analysis showed that Devonport was cheaper by a total of some £52 million over the period.<sup>125</sup> Taking those factors into account without including redundancy costs, the total difference between the two bids was £64 million in favour of Devonport. However, it was argued that Devonport savings estimates were minuscule in relation to the size and importance of this project and failed to validate the relocation of Trident operations.

For Fife residents and employees of the Scottish yard this decision was understandably interpreted as a betrayal of numerous promises given. Furthermore, many believed Rosyth no longer had a long-term future, and alleged that the reallocation of refit operations back to Rosyth would have threatened the government's slim eighteen-seat majority in the Commons.<sup>126</sup> When considering

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<sup>125</sup> *TI*, 25 June 1993, p. 8; *Dockyards*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 407 Col 47, 24 June 1993.

<sup>126</sup> There was outrage at the upside-down decision, which was slammed at the time as a political fix to secure Conservative seats. Interview with Livingstone (19/06/03). Squire believed the decision was

Rosyth's bitter disappointment, John Major recalled in 1984 that the Labour Party was keen to decommission Trident and added, 'how strange it is, people would think, that they want to scrap military hardware one day and fight for it another'.<sup>127</sup> Major's assertion was a jab at Labour's grip on Scotland, but despite the party's flop on disarmament some four years earlier the Fife Region's dedication to the project was unquestionable.

Local government immediately fired back a negative response to central government's decision, and within weeks of this verdict Fife Regional Council wrote to the House of Commons Select Committee on Defence that:

The decision to award the Trident refit contract, alongside all other submarine refit work, to Devonport reverses commitments given to Rosyth by Government Ministers over the last nine years...The future of Rosyth now depends on an allocated programme of surface vessel refit work. It is therefore understandable that there is significant doubt over the strength of Government commitments to the future of Rosyth Royal Dockyard.<sup>128</sup>

Fife's trust in the government's judgment was irreparably damaged, and at the time of the council's submission the Defence Committee also scrutinized the decision, considering the process by which management were asked to make proposals for refits as flawed and potentially unfair. Ultimately, the Committee could not confirm that the decision reached was a 'prudent one'.<sup>129</sup> Furthermore, the Ministry of Defence had 'insisted' on Rosyth continuing to develop RD57 whilst Devonport

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politically motivated, and that the Conservatives felt the decision to relocate refits would assist them in the 97 General Election. Interview with Squire (12/5/03).

<sup>127</sup> *TI*, 25 June 1993, p. 8.

<sup>128</sup> RSCO Fife Regional Council, *Rosyth: Memorandum of Evidence from Fife Regional Council to the House of Commons Select Committee of Defence* (Fife Regional Council: July 1993), p. 12.

<sup>129</sup> They also considered that a decision made on the basis of a relatively small cost difference as 'unsafe'. Seventh Report from the Defence Committee, *The Royal Dockyards* (London: HMSO), HC 829 of Session 1992-93, 22 July 1993, p. 71.

worked up in detail its refurbishment plans, placing the Fife yard at a serious disadvantage.<sup>130</sup> The late acceptance by the government of this inequity delayed the decision by six months, but the delayed consideration of the issue by Rosyth was used against the Scottish yard for arguments in favour of Devonport.<sup>131</sup> By 1995 rumours circulated that Trident refits might be returned to Rosyth, but it was argued that if the decision was reversed it would merely confirm that the selection was 'motivated by interests of the Tory Party'.<sup>132</sup> After Labour's landslide victory in 1997 Defence Ministers did consider reversing the decision, though it would have created uproar in England, but Fife's fate was sealed after final details of the contractual agreement were completed by the Major government and settled just one month previous to the general election.<sup>133</sup> Regardless of the numerous accusations concerning political bias, there were other far less obvious factors that significantly influenced the outcome.

Fife's local authorities were correct when they assumed that the future of both the Base and the Dockyard were intertwined, as the closure of HMS *Cochrane* was part of the whole consideration in that it was indicative of the Navy's preference to be based in the south-west rather than in Scotland. In the midst of industrial competition, Babcock management also understood this to be true. The decision to refit at Devonport was also part of this situation - refits sometimes required up to two years to complete, and in that time, there was a significant naval presence at the refit location. If added into the equation that Babcock's proposal was to undertake the entire nuclear refit programme for Royal Navy submarines, not just SSBN but the

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<sup>130</sup> Work at Rosyth already completed was added to expense calculations, placing costs higher in Fife.

<sup>131</sup> Fife Regional Council, *Rosyth: Memorandum of Evidence*, p. 1.

<sup>132</sup> *TS*, 18 May 1995, p. 1. Admitting that at this late stage would bring no dividends for the Government either in Scotland or England. *TS*, 4 November 1995, p. 11.

entire SSN fleet as well, there remained a very difficult case to make in order to keep Devonport open. If the southern Dockyard was retired as a refit centre the situation became even more difficult to keep open the equivalent operational base for surface ships at Devonport, particularly given the spare capacity at Portsmouth. Furthermore, Devonport had a rich naval tradition as its origins dated back to 1691, when William of Orange commissioned the building of a new dockyard to support the Royal Navy in the Western Approaches.<sup>134</sup> Because of the sentimentality attached to the southern yard there were those in the Royal Navy who wanted this work given to Devonport. Due to the Royal Navy's vast presence in Plymouth, it is 'fair to say' that senior navy officials supported Rosyth but there was a significant number who pushed for Devonport.<sup>135</sup> It was therefore a combination of these factors that sent Trident refits, and Fife's socio-economic situation, south.

## **Conclusion**

After successfully refitting and refuelling the Resolution class under conditions more primitive to that of Trident, over the years Rosyth had indeed performed the dirty work of nuclear-powered submarine operations. With this impressive technical experience under their belts, by 1980 Dockyard employees, Fife representatives and everyday residents believed the region had earned the right to conduct maintenance on the replacement deterrent, perhaps going as far as assuming that such responsibilities were indeed reserved to the east of Scotland. It is without question that the likelihood of such operations heading south must have appeared incomprehensible.

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<sup>133</sup> This contract guaranteed that if a Labour government attempted to relocate work from Devonport and back to Rosyth it would require massive compensation to Devonport. Interview with Squire, (12/5/03).

<sup>134</sup> Interview with Corbett (20/06/03)

Nevertheless, both a decade's worth of guarantees and considerable investment from Conservative governments were left both abandoned and unfulfilled. Despite a prolonged history of commendable service to the Royal Navy, the end of international tensions once again threatened, and ultimately extinguished, that need which justified the Dockyard's existence. For the workers of Rosyth, the situation was a cruel twist of fate. Rather than collapsing under the weight of a hot war, the Dockyard had quickly succumbed to the influences of peace.

When considering Rosyth's experience it should be recognised that throughout the Cold War, NATO had been basically a defensive coalition, organised for the purposes of deterrence. The earliest concept of massive retaliation with nuclear weapons gave way to a strategy of flexible response. This involved more emphasis in US and NATO planning on controlled nuclear responses and general purpose forces that could hold their own against a conventional attack by Warsaw Pact forces. The third and final phase of NATO Cold War military planning was that associated with the forward defence strategy, and the accompanying maritime strategy, formally adopted in 1984. This policy sought to bring war into the Soviet's backyard with counterforce attacks on Soviet naval facilities.<sup>136</sup> The American and British Trident systems were key components of this collective strategy. However, by the mid-1990s NATO faced an uncertain future, its traditional strategy in disarray now that the Soviet Union no longer served as a threat to the West. Some critics argued that because of the

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<sup>135</sup> Interview with Squire (12/05/03).

<sup>136</sup> Strategy involving mass retaliation was a credible deterrent only while the US possessed overwhelming nuclear superiority. This came to an end in the late 1950s after the introduction of growing Soviet capabilities in long- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles and aircraft posed an unmistakable threat to the US and its NATO allies. With the forward defence strategy, it added depth to the battlefield in Europe by targeting and destroying Warsaw Pact rear echelon forces, probably the weakest link in the Soviet order of battle. S.L Reardon, 'NATO's Strategy: Past, Present and Future', in S. Victor Papacosma and Mary Ann Heiss (eds) *NATO in the Post-Cold War Era: Does it have a Future?* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2000), p. 72.

disintegration of communism in Eastern Europe, NATO strategy, like the alliance itself, had outlived its usefulness. As NATO moved into the post-Cold War era, its interests turned to the alliance's political strategy, emphasising such issues as its role as a peacekeeper and its future relations with former members of the Warsaw Pact.<sup>137</sup> Therefore, what once appeared to be vital additions to the NATO arsenal essentially became luxuries.<sup>138</sup> By the mid-1990s it seemed difficult not to consider Trident as an extravagance. In 1995 a British Pugwash Group report concluded that during the Cold War Britain's nuclear weapons had no detectable influence over events; no allied country depended on them; and their actual use would have invited a disastrous nuclear strike to the UK. However, central government frequently argued that possessing nuclear weapons gave Britain more influence in international negotiations than it would have without them, a proposition difficult to substantiate or contradict, let alone quantify.<sup>139</sup> Conservative and Labour governments repeatedly employed this argument as a justification for Trident, but it did nothing to secure the future of the Dockyard.

Accusations of political bias were plentiful in Fife during the period after June 1993, but evidence has revealed that the unforeseen demise of the Scottish complex actually had more to do with the inclinations of the Admiralty, tremendous reduction in defence expenditure and the Royal Navy's consequential restructuring. It is not unreasonable to suggest that Fife communities failed to appreciate either the complexity or potency of industrial politics, as the unexpected by-products of the

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<sup>137</sup> The Warsaw Pact was created in May 1955 and linked the USSR with the eastern states of Europe in a military alliance, completing the dualities of East versus West, NATO versus Warsaw.

<sup>138</sup> S.L Reardon, *NATO's Strategy*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>139</sup> It is not clear what locations are possible targets for the Trident system following the collapse of the Soviet Union. R.S. Pease, 'An End to British Nuclear Weapons?' in Douglas Holdstock (ed.) *British Nuclear Weapons Programmes, 1952-2002* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), p. 134

Soviet Union's collapse were ultimately responsible for Trident's relocation rather than some vicious act on behalf of the Conservative government. Yet even if this was a general misunderstanding, the actual circumstances would have provided no more comfort. Due to an unexpected transformation within the strategic setting, both the Major government and dockyard facilities were thrust into a dilemma influenced through economic austerity. For the Fife establishment, the final verdict proved unfavourable. However, without the collapse of the Soviet Union it is highly unlikely that senior naval officials would have disrupted Trident's operations when construction for the Rosyth complex was well underway. Fife's heavy reliance on the UK's defence industry in times of peace proved fatal, but one might also suppose that Scotland's long-standing relationship with the Labour Party did nothing to assist either the Dockyard or the region in regards to central government's decision.

Beneath the surface of these implications, there were also other less influential factors that impaired the case for Rosyth. All dockyards initially failed in some degree to meet basic Polaris requirements, and dockyard qualifications contained certain prerequisites that were not exclusive to the Rosyth facility.<sup>140</sup> Therefore, the transition of refits to an alternative site hardly represented an impossibility. Of lesser consideration, Fife's arguments for refitting Trident were also potentially compromised by the disarmament movement and Scottish civil society's traditional hostility toward nuclear weaponry, with Dunfermline and Fife councils also professing their initial discomfort with the act of deterrence. In the post-Cold War environment, all these factors arguably contributed to Rosyth's deprivation, and

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<sup>140</sup> The operating base for Polaris was required to be in close proximity to deep water; to offer easy navigational access; and to be a short distance by sea from the associated armament depot. *Polaris submarines (OperatingBase)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 676 Col 219, 24 April 1963.

Devonport's success. As a result, Fife's residents suffered from this combination of factors and the weight of this most difficult situation could not be understated. Yet to fully grasp the experiences of both Strathclyde and Fife, there remains a need to address the Scottish political dimension of Trident.

### **Chapter Three: The Scottish political dimension of Trident**

The third chapter of this study will consider the policies of the four main parties competing in Scottish electoral politics, as well as the Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) and the Scottish Green Party, so that one might determine the successes and failures of their various strategies with the national deterrent.

Thatcher's decision to replace the Polaris system initially served as the stimulus for intense hostility in Scotland. However, the Callaghan government had already made significant progress with its negotiations over Trident, and, of particular interest to Scottish historians, the decision to pursue the system was withheld from the electorate so as not to influence either the 1979 devolution referendum or the upcoming general election. This was the first occasion where the system failed to incite a noticeable reaction from the Scottish electorate. If we fast-forward to 1997, the Cold War was no more and the disarmament issue had become largely debilitated in the years previous to the second attempt at devolution. With the system functional and the electorate fully familiarised, Trident again held little influence over Scotland's determination for greater autonomy. The Strathclyde and Fife chapters have shown that Scots generally dismissed Trident's presence in their lochs for economic and security reasons, and, as will be seen, this was best demonstrated through the way in which they voted.

#### **Procurement and political reaction**

According to political scientist Ritchie Owendale a report by Professor James Mason, Chief Scientific Advisor to the Ministry of Defence, and Sir Anthony Duff, Deputy

Under-Secretary in the Foreign Office, at some time suggested that Prime Minister James Callaghan replace the increasingly dated Polaris system with that of Trident.<sup>1</sup> With the credibility of Labour's economic policies all but destroyed in the late 1970s, the Scotland Act 1978 becoming law and a general election on the foreseeable horizon, Callaghan understood that the procurement of this incredibly expensive system held the potential for unfavourable political ramifications.<sup>2</sup> By this time Thatcher had already committed the Conservative Party to a policy of maintaining an effective deterrent, as Harold Macmillan and the party had in 1963, but in March 1978 Fred Mulley, Secretary of State, insisted that 'there is no need to take a decision' because 'the Polaris fleet has many years of effective life ahead of it'.<sup>3</sup> However, it is clear that Callaghan appreciated the increasing inadequacies of Polaris, and began making arrangements with Carter in January 1979 to acquire Trident while agreeing to the siting of GLCMs at Greenham Common in response to the Soviet Union's installation of SS-20s.<sup>4</sup> This clandestine agreement was contrary to Labour's policy at that time, and within its 1979 manifesto the party took the line that Polaris should not be replaced.<sup>5</sup> For obvious reasons, matters under the shady umbrella of national security are strictly withheld from the public arena. Yet with both the referendum and general election drawing near, it likely that this arrangement was concealed from the electorate so that Trident would not assist the SNP in the midst of a referendum and have no bearing on the return of a Labour government.

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<sup>1</sup> This was due to Soviet technical advancements in ABM systems. Ovendale, *Anglo-American Relations*, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup> Labour's troubles were heightened by an effective series of election posters for the Conservatives with the slogan 'Labour isn't working' striking a chord with voters. *ibid.*, p. 142; Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> *Polaris*, Hansard (Lords), Vol 391 Col 601, 18 May 1978.

<sup>4</sup> *Polaris*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 946 Col 1315, 21 March 1978; Ring, *We Come Unseen*, p. 151.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151; *The Labour Way is the Better Way-The Labour Party Manifesto 1979* (London: Labour Party, 1979).

In Scotland, questions over its constitutional status had been sustained for over a century but the inept Scotland Act 1978 did nothing to rectify the case for greater autonomy.<sup>6</sup> While much has been written by historians about the Scottish Home Rule movement, the political gravity of these campaigns ebbed and flowed, with the movement gathering noticeable strength during the late 1960s. Coincidentally, the historic victory of nationalist Winifred Ewing in the November 1967 Hamilton by-election occurred while the first Resolution class boats made their way to Faslane around that time. This was followed by the SNP obtaining 34 per cent of votes in the Scottish local elections in May of that year, a total higher than that of any other party.<sup>7</sup> The Scottish electorate was about to experience its first glimpse of Britain's model for sea-borne nuclear deterrence, and by November 1968 the boats HMS *Resolution*, HMS *Repulse* and HMS *Renown* were either stationed at Faslane or close to arrival, while the American Polaris fleet simultaneously occupied the Holy Loch. It is likely that Scottish apprehensions with the SSBN were tempered by concerns with national security, or fears of a nuclear holocaust, as the blasts over Nagasaki and Hiroshima, and the Cuban Missile Crisis, were stored firmly within living memory. Though this is another aspect of Scottish history that deserves further exploration, it is without question that the Labour and Conservative parties were desperate to appease nationalist sentiment at that time.

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<sup>6</sup> While Scottish and English parliaments merged in 1707 under the Treaty of Union, events in the nineteenth century, especially campaigns between 1877-1885 for Irish Home Rule, produced an increasing desire for a measure of internal self-government. The post of Secretary for Scotland expired in 1746, was revived in 1855, and after the creation of the Scottish Home Rule Association in 1886 it later became a Cabinet post in 1892. The position was upgraded and became a full Secretary of State post in 1926, with a separate Scottish Office created as a government department. Nevertheless, talk of restoring a sovereign Parliament and the concept of federal arrangements failed to subside. See: D.G. Boyce, *The Revolution in Ireland* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988); C. Burness, 'Strange Association': the Irish question and the making of Scottish unionism, 1886-1918 (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 2003); G. Morton, *Unionist nationalism: governing urban Scotland 1830-1860* (East Lothian: Tuckwell Press, 1999), p. 197; and L. Paterson, 'Scotland's Parliament' in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), p. 287.

<sup>7</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 148.

Despite the build-up of Britain's own nuclear arsenal, by October 1973 the Kilbrandon report recommended a form of legislative devolution as pressure was sustained in the mid-1970s. During the 1974 general election the SNP won eleven seats and 30 per cent of the vote. Though the SSBN is not acknowledged in her book, *Stop the World: the autobiography of Winnie Ewing*, could it be that the staggered yet speedy arrival of Polaris boats served to benefit the SNP to some extent?<sup>8</sup> Finally, in 1978, the government had put forward legislation to establish a Scottish Assembly.<sup>9</sup> Though questions with Polaris remain, Trident would not increase support for the SNP.

Despite the Callaghan government's precarious situation, and considerable parliamentary struggle, the Scotland Act 1978 was finally realised though persistent complexities with the devolution process remained. According to Oxford professor Vernon Bogdanor, the Act failed to address the continued over-representation of Scotland in the Commons, the sustained retention of the Secretary for State for Scotland in the Cabinet and underwent the 'supreme folly' of establishing a legislature with the power to spend, but not tax.<sup>10</sup> According to Harvie, there were fierce divisions within the Labour Party but Scottish MPs were somewhat pacified by a clause which made the final enactment dependent on over 40 per cent of the electorate voting 'Yes'.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, the Scotland Act's ineptitude encouraged the various parties to use the bill to suit their own distinct political agendas. The SNP employed the Act as a gateway to separation, the Liberals used it as a step to

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<sup>8</sup> Winnie Ewing with Michael Russell, *Stop the World: the autobiography of Winnie Ewing* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Limited, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> L. Paterson, 'Introduction' in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), pp. 75-77.

<sup>10</sup> V. Bogdanor, 'The Defeat of Devolution' in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), p. 132.

federalism and for Labour it was purely a means in which to retain its hold on power.<sup>12</sup> After the referendum of 1 March 1979 the devolution scheme was supported by an uninspired 52 per cent of those voting, with this figure only accounting for 33 per cent of the total electorate.<sup>13</sup> The Scottish Assembly was left unrealised. The ‘Scotland says No’ campaign had also been successful in advertising the ‘expense, bureaucracy, and disruption’ of devolution at that time.<sup>14</sup>

Regardless of Callaghan’s ability to distance Trident from the referendum, his concealment did not secure the future of the Labour government. By the end of the summer of 1976, ‘seismic shudders’ rattled the party as the British economy had become so fatigued that the government sought assistance from the International Monetary Fund. Deep cuts in public spending soon coincided with over 1,600,000 unemployed by August 1977.<sup>15</sup> In 1978-79, Labour unrest reached its peak during the ‘Winter of Discontent’ when Callaghan hoped to keep public sector pay claims under five per cent. Several of the major trade unions went on strike and the collapse of the Social Contract became a ‘devastating disappointment’ for its trade union architects.<sup>16</sup> Other strikes threatened. However, Callaghan was labelled as ‘out of touch’ after the famous *Sun* headline, ‘Crisis? What Crisis?’ was released, and this series of events struck and fatally wounded the government as the resurgent Conservatives ultimately succeeded in pinning the blame for the state of the country on Labour.<sup>17</sup> Thereafter, the 1979 general election led to the party’s downfall as Labour’s relative success in

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<sup>11</sup> The 40 per cent rule that had been set by George Cunningham and Westminster as a benchmark standard to be crossed. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 163.

<sup>12</sup> Bogdanor, *The Defeat of Devolution*, p. 132.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 132.

<sup>14</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 165.

<sup>15</sup> H. Wainwright, *Labour: The Tale of Two Parties* (London: The Hargoath Press, 1987), p. 30.

<sup>16</sup> The Social Contract of the 1974-1979 Labour government was to be a combination of political education and trade-union action. *Ibid*, p. 209.

Scotland was eclipsed on 3 May by its colossal defeat south of the Border. Trident's future was guaranteed as the Conservatives maintained power for the next eighteen years.

In the midst of the Cold War, Thatcher made known her determination to maintain British national security, and upon her arrival to Downing Street she considered it 'constructive' when Callaghan allowed her to observe his correspondence with Carter over Trident.<sup>18</sup> However, because the Conservatives were opposed to devolution and believed there was no evidence to suggest that Scots sought change in their constitutional status, Thatcher sent shockwaves throughout the country when one of the first acts of her government was to repeal the Scotland Act.<sup>19</sup> With calls for greater autonomy effectively neutralised in Scotland, there may be a correlation between Thatcher's rejection of home rule and central government's negotiations for Trident with the US government. This is merely an assumption and will remain as such until appropriate sources throw more light on this issue. Yet while the suspension of home rule undoubtedly had much to do with traditional Conservative Party values, constitutional change in Scotland held the potential to influence an agreement over the system with the Americans. Arguably, political tranquillity in Scotland reassured the Americans of Britain's stability and this may have proved advantageous for central government in its pursuit of the system. Thatcher's progress with the deterrent option began almost immediately.

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<sup>17</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 163; K. O. Morgan, *Callaghan: A life* (Oxford: OUP, 1997).

<sup>18</sup> Ring, *We Come Unseen*, p. 161. Thatcher stated that 'my main concern in 1979 was that resistance of NATO to the latest Soviet threat was less adequate than I would have liked'. Thatcher intended to restore British self-confidence. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 238.

<sup>19</sup> B. Taylor, *The Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1999), p. 12-29.

Although dates are unclear the investigative committee, Miscellaneous 7 (MISC 7), was assembled to review the various alternatives to the SSBN with the main argument for Trident attributed to the approaching obsolescence of the Polaris system.<sup>20</sup> Over the course of some fifteen months a settlement regarding the deterrent's replacement was made official.

Similar to that of Polaris, Trident represented a formidable, stealthy system that also enabled the UK to maintain cooperation with the US as it had since the 1963 Polaris Sales Agreement.<sup>21</sup> With the GLCM option discarded, after December 1979 Thatcher concluded an agreement for Trident with Carter before he became too preoccupied with the 1980 presidential election.<sup>22</sup> Without hesitation, she stated in a letter to the President:

I write...to ask you whether the United States Government would be prepared... to supply on a continuing basis, Trident I missiles, equipment and supporting services, in a manner generally similar to that in which Polaris was supplied.<sup>23</sup>

Sometime before July 1980, Carter agreed. Despite the US administration's request for political and financial returns, in order to replace Polaris by the mid-1990s the Prime Minister consented to several less preferable conditions.<sup>24</sup> However, soon after Carter's massive electoral defeat the government was forced to reconsider its previous arrangements as the recently established Reagan administration opted to enter full

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<sup>20</sup> MISC 7 kept a low profile to maintain minimal leakage to the Cabinet's larger Defence and Overseas Committee. This was a continuation of Labour's 1978 ultra secret committee. S. McLean, *How Nuclear Decisions Are Made* (London: MacMillan Press Ltd., 1986), p. 46.

<sup>21</sup> *Polaris Sales Agreement Cmnd 1995* (London: HMSO, 6 April 1963).

<sup>22</sup> This decision left the smaller proportion of opposition in Scotland to deal with Trident. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 246.

<sup>23</sup> *Britain's Future Nuclear Strategic Nuclear Deterrent Force*, Defence Open Government Document 80/23 (Ministry of Defence, July 1980).

<sup>24</sup> For information on these conditions see Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 246.

development with the Trident II D5 programme in November 1981. It did not take long before Thatcher came to the conclusion that, 'the more we considered the question the more it seemed that if we were to maintain a credible deterrent...we must have Trident II.'<sup>25</sup> Under an agreement preferable to that offered by the previous administration, Britain entered into contract with the US to purchase the modified system in March 1982.<sup>26</sup> Because Trident's sizeable fee was to be paid over the course of fifteen years, naval historian Jim Ring explained that many questioned 'whether the country could afford the weapon.'<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, the decision to adopt Trident stood.

As discussed in Chapter Five the disarmament movement experienced a noticeable surge in public support during this period, with the government's political opposition using this opportunity to explore a number of avenues in which to challenge the procurement of Trident. After the summer of 1974 a small but growing unilateralist wing of the Labour Party was provoked by Britain's testing of a Polaris missile, yet several members believed there was no evidence to suggest that British disarmament would affect the policies of other countries.<sup>28</sup> This split in ideologies would trouble the party for years to come. After the 1979 election Michael Foot replaced Callaghan as party leader and encouraged Labour to 'somehow...translate anxieties and perils [with nuclear weapons] into the material for an election contest'.<sup>29</sup> Yet this strategy amounted to little more than a political catastrophe as within the party the 'Gang of

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<sup>25</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 247.

<sup>26</sup> These conditions included reduced overheads and levies. Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 248; *The British Strategic Nuclear Force*, Cmnd 8517 (London: HMSO, 11 March 1982)

<sup>27</sup> The government pledged itself, with some controversy, to match overall NATO spending, increasing the defence budget by three per cent annually. Trident was also considered by many as an unnecessary escalation of firepower. Ring, *We Come Unseen*, p. 162.

<sup>28</sup> Wainwright, *Labour: A Tale of Two Parties*, p. 61.

<sup>29</sup> M. Foot, *Dr. Strangelove, I Presume* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1999), pp. 75-76.

Four' flatly rejected Labour's return to disarmament. The issue was therefore partially responsible for the creation of the Social Democratic Party (SDP).<sup>30</sup> Following the Special Labour Conference at Wembley on 2 March 1981, twelve Labour MPs resigned the party whip and announced that they would not seek re-election. By April the SDP was launched with fourteen MPs, in June the SDP Scottish Liaison Committee was assembled and by 1983 this became the SDP Council for Scotland.<sup>31</sup> Rejecting complete disarmament the party believed that only Polaris should be retained as 'Britain [needed] friends in a dangerous world, which means playing our full part in the European Community and in NATO, vigorously pursuing multilateral but not unilateral disarmament.'<sup>32</sup> With Labour left free to self-destruct, Dr. Gavin Strang, Labour MP for Edinburgh East, subscribed to Foot's position and argued that Trident represented a 'first strike weapon' that compulsorily conscripted the west of Scotland into the front line of 'nuclear madness'.<sup>33</sup> The SNP concurred.

Harvie has made it clear that 'since the 1963 conference' the SNP went left on the disarmament issue, with Chalmers and Walker emphasising that the party had 'drawn on genuine moral concerns and a long pacifist tradition in Scotland' that was entrenched in 'a nationalist depiction of England as Scotland's exploiter'.<sup>34</sup> The SNP therefore condemned Thatcher's decision and by March 1982 Donald Stewart, SNP

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<sup>30</sup> The 'Gang of Four' involved Shirley Williams, David Owen, William Rodgers and Roy Jenkins.

<sup>31</sup> SDP, *Focus on the Future: A strategy for innovation* (London: Policy document No.22, no date).

<sup>32</sup> Trident was rejected and Polaris would be maintained. C. Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party: 1990-1997* (London: MacMillan Press, 1998) p. 168; I. Bradley, *Breaking the mould? The Birth and Prospects of the Social Democratic Party* (Oxford: Martin Robertson Press, 1981), p. 123.

<sup>33</sup> For more on Trident's offensive capabilities see M. Dando and P. Rodgers, *The Death of Deterrence* (London: CND Publications, 1984); *The UK Trident Programme*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 21 Col 21, 8 April 1982.

<sup>34</sup> The party also went left on land nationalisation, with both having value in directing its campaigns. C. Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707-1994* (London: Routledge Press, 1994), p. 176, 199. Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 23.

MP for the Western Isles, prophesied that the government would 'face massive opposition' in Scotland.<sup>35</sup> This assumption never fully materialised.

Thatcher, being both shrewd and unwavering, understood that Scots had learned to live with Polaris and would eventually do so with its successor, especially in the midst of economic depression. Consequently, for the next five years the Conservatives sold Trident to Scotland not on the merits of security, but through the promise of financial gain. In mid-March 1982, Bill Walker, former Scottish Affairs Select Committee Member, suggested that Trident 'excited' Scotland with 'Scottish engineers given the opportunity to participate in the work at Coulport'. Furthermore, Sir Russell Fairgrieve, Conservative MP for Aberdeenshire West, defended the system's technological superiority over that of Polaris by arguing that the British infantry did not restrict themselves to 'single repeater rifles upon the arrival of the machine gun'.<sup>36</sup> Yet this is not to suggest that the government was oblivious to the controversy in Scotland. According to the *Glasgow Herald*, during her first public endorsement for her Falklands recovery strategy at the Scottish Conservative Centenary Conference at Perth Thatcher went about 'substituting a controversial motion that supported Trident' with a patriotic endorsement of the British response to the Argentinean invasion in May 1982.<sup>37</sup> Coinciding with the development of Defence Secretariat 19 (DS 19), a special unit inside the Ministry of Defence designed to counter CND influence, Conservative propaganda, combined with economic hardship, ultimately succeeded in suppressing a considerable degree of anxiety with the system in Scotland.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps in part due to the discernible absence of civil unrest from Strathclyde and Fife territories,

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<sup>35</sup> *The UK Trident programme*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 21 Col 47-50, 8 April 1982.

<sup>36</sup> *The UK Trident Programme*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 21 Col 29, 29 March 1982.

<sup>37</sup> *GH*, 13 May 1982.

<sup>38</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement.

by June 1983 Callaghan also appreciated the stamina of Scottish rationalisation and warned his Labour colleagues that disarmament was a 'dead issue' for the electorate.<sup>39</sup>

Political scientist James Mitchell has explained that 'opponents of home rule argued that it was possible to be culturally Scottish but politically British', but this should not imply that Britain's desire to defend itself through Trident, or its victory in the Falklands, bolstered this sentiment.<sup>40</sup> Nor should the Falklands campaign suggest a swing towards the Conservatives in Scotland. Before the Falklands invasion of April 1982, the Hillhead by-election was won by Roy Jenkins of the SDP. This was a symbolic victory as it was the last Conservative seat held in Glasgow, Scotland's largest population component. There was considerable support in Scotland for the SDP, and along with the Liberals they took 25 per cent of the Scottish popular vote in the 1983 general election.<sup>41</sup> Furthermore, some Scottish Labour MPs and many of their constituents were less enthusiastic about the war than the 'flag-waving jingoists' in England, not least the patriotic overtones exploited by the Conservatives.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless, at a British level disarmament policies proved to be a dismal failure for the political left despite the fact that *Polaris* did not deter Argentinian aggression. Throughout the remainder of the UK the conflict in the South Atlantic clearly demonstrated that Trident was essential for British security, and its interests, both home and abroad, thereby discrediting those parties that chose to abandon the deterrent. In Scotland, and in Strathclyde and Fife particularly, the Trident issue

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<sup>39</sup> This should not imply that Scots were enamoured with either Trident or the jobs it provided. *GH*, 30 June 1983, p. 1.

<sup>40</sup> The Scots Guards served in the Falklands campaign. The identity issue is examined in greater detail in Chapter Four. J. Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government* (Edinburgh: Polygon Press, 1996), p. 26.

experienced an economic twist as it was transformed into a simple question of employment. However, the Falklands was a matter far less volatile in Scotland than Trident at that time, and it is this that explains Thatcher's strategy in Perth. Yet the nuclear issue itself was becoming a topic of lesser importance, even in Scotland.

Though central government promoted the system as a vehicle for economic returns, in 1983 a majority of Scots sided with Labour despite the party's opposition to the system, and the jobs it ultimately supported. This was another sign of Trident's fading potency north of the Border. When the party reversed its policy on disarmament, as will be seen, both Strathclyde and Fife remained Labour strongholds between 1983 and 1997 regardless of this deviation.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, when given the opportunity to elect the first Scottish Parliament in nearly 300 years, Scots reiterated their support for Labour despite the fact that they were granted yet another institution in which they were able to voice their opposition to the system. Despite the initial success of the disarmament movement, after the Secretary of State for Scotland approved the Trident Works Programme the political impact of Trident should not be exaggerated.

It came as little surprise that the SNP's 1983 manifesto again emphasised concerns with Scottish nuclear bases and military installations, and Labour's manifesto, later described by Labour MP Gerald Kaufman as 'the longest suicide note in history', also

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<sup>41</sup> H. Drucker, 'The Curious Incident: Scottish Party Competition Since 1979' in D. McCrone (ed.), *The Scottish Government Yearbook, 1983* (Edinburgh: Unit for the Study of Government in Scotland, 1982), p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> P. Routeledge, *Gordon Brown: the biography* (London: Simon and Schuster UK, 1998), p. 99.

<sup>43</sup> Both retained a high percentage of employees at Faslane and Rosyth. C. Rallings and M. Thrasher, *New Britain: New Elections, the media guide to the new political map of Britain* (London: Vacher Dod Publishing, 1999), p. 68,74.

pledged to 'cancel Trident'.<sup>44</sup> Because Labour was a political heavyweight in Scotland it serves as yet another indicator of the identity dimension, but from a UK perspective the party was, according to Thatcher, by this time associated with 'high tax' and a 'host of other irresponsible policies'.<sup>45</sup> However, Trident's controversial status led to an over-abundance of identical disarmament policies throughout the 1980s. Though this was of little consequence in Scotland, it presented an unfavourable situation for the major parties as it ultimately cornered the British electorate. The CPGB had also remained opposed to the SSBN since the earliest days of Polaris, the Green Party went as far as stating, 'No nuclear weapons of any description', and the new Social and Liberal Democrat Alliance, headed jointly by Liberal David Steel and Social Democrat Roy Jenkins, supported the 'cancellation of Trident and the inclusion of Polaris in disarmament negotiations'.<sup>46</sup> Of six distinct parties, and to the government's advantage, the British electorate was left with two simple alternatives when considering British security. After the 1983 general election, the Conservatives attained a clear majority with 397 seats within the Commons as Labour's position slipped a further sixty from 1979. The Liberal-SDP Alliance, curtailed by the first-past-the-post voting system, took twenty-three, and the

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<sup>44</sup> SNP, *Choose Scotland: The Challenge of Independence*, 1983 General Election manifesto, p. 10; *The New Hope For Britain: Labour's manifesto 1983* (London: Labour Party, 1983); Foot, *Dr Strangelove*, p. 75.

<sup>45</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 290.

<sup>46</sup> The CPGB was not good at looking after its records and the interest of historians was not at the forefront of the minds of party officials. Limited information was available over the course of this research. Interview with Willie Thompson, Visiting Professor at Northumbria University (20/02/2003). The Green Party was very much a minority party in electoral terms, numbering only 6,000 members in the mid-1980s. The Liberal Party was traditionally opposed to Britain's possession of nuclear weaponry. P. Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament* (London: Routledge, 1988), p. 206. The Liberal Party agreed to work with the SDP to construct a winning manifesto for the 1983 General Election. Liberal SDP Alliance, *Working Together for Britain: Programme for Government, 1983 Liberal SDP Alliance Manifesto* (London, published for Liberal SDP Alliance by SDP, 1983); *The Liberal Democrats: A Short History* (policy briefing 40), February 2001, p. 1

'inexperience that cost the SNP nine MPs in 1979' led to internal conflict that contributed to another poor result in 1983.<sup>47</sup>

During the Cold War era central government benefited from the disarmament policies of its opposition as the Labour Party and others failed to appreciate the weakened state of this issue both in Scotland and throughout the wider UK. With Scottish unemployment standing at 14.9 per cent in 1984 Harvie has written extensively on the decline of traditional industry in the 1980s. Therefore, it is apparent that the acquisition of Trident was considered by many to be an appropriate security measure, and a lifeline for the civilian employees of Coulport, Faslane and Rosyth.<sup>48</sup> So much so that the May 1986 Chernobyl disaster, and the wave of radiological contamination that spread across Western Europe, did little to discourage these workers from maintaining the deterrent though another line of work was often preferred.<sup>49</sup> Yet advocates for disarmament often argued that the system was merely a source of short-term employment in Scotland, fostered through wrongful proliferation. At that time Labour subscribed to this assumption, but Neil Kinnock, once described as a man who 'brought to his constituency a breath of ... CND, of sit-ins and of demonstrations against Vietnam and apartheid', inherited a shattered party with serious divisions over the system.<sup>50</sup> Changes were in order, but with Labour struggling to gain political credibility central government was able to plough through the Town and Country

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<sup>47</sup> I. Crewe, *The British electorate 1963-1987: a compendium of data from the British election studies* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991); Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 179; David Owen retained his Plymouth Devonport seat, being elected for the first time as an SDP MP. Roy Jenkins resigned the Party leadership following the election, and David Owen was elected without contest as Party Leader. *David Owen Papers* (Liverpool University, Special Collections and Archives), SDP Records 1981-1990, D709 3; I. Crewe, *The British electorate 1963-1987*.

<sup>48</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 168.; AESG, *Polaris and Trident*, p. 32.

<sup>49</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 168.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 179. R. Harris, *The Making of Neil Kinnock* (London: Faber and Faber, 1984), p. 18. Kinnock stripped away opposition to council house sales, of threatening withdrawal from the European

Planning (Scotland) Act of 1972, the law of planning in Scotland and the demands of Strathclyde councils as the Trident Works Programme was approved in March 1985.<sup>51</sup> The opposition was clearly in a state of paralysis.

To some extent it was the government's intention to offer economic assistance to Strathclyde and Fife Regions through Trident, and while Thatcher described Mikhail Gorbachev as someone with whom she could 'do business', this did not prevent the Conservatives from effectively promoting a system that was designed to annihilate his country.<sup>52</sup> In 1985 the nationalists initiated a study into non-nuclear uses for Faslane and Rosyth, but in May 1986 the Ministry of Defence unveiled a £220 million Trident modernisation programme for the Dockyard.<sup>53</sup> With local economies in dire need of investment, these regions were receptive to such programmes and studies that did not apply to the immediate future were of little interest. This general consensus failed to discourage either the disarmament movement or the political left, and the Conservatives, capitalising on this misinterpretation of the public's demeanour, were relentless in their propaganda. In 1985 Sir Hector Monro, Conservative MP for Dumfries, insisted that 50,000 jobs could have been lost in Scotland if the system was not implemented.<sup>54</sup> Michael Forsyth, Conservative MP for Stirling, also warned in October 1986 that thousands of jobs would be lost in Scotland if Trident was

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Community, and import controls as answers to economic affliction. BBC News, *Bitter fight to a new dawn*, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/uk\\_politics/2000/labour\\_centenary/645202.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/uk_politics/2000/labour_centenary/645202.stm)

<sup>51</sup> Planning law stated that special inquiry should be performed with 'considerations of national and regional importance' and when 'unfamiliar technical or scientific aspects' are involved with a proposed development. E. Young, *The Law of Planning in Scotland* (Glasgow: Hodge, 1978), p. 63; *Trident development (Clyde)*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 27 Col 265-272, July 5 1982.

<sup>52</sup> This was an unprecedented public accolade from her for any Soviet official. Dobrynin, *In Confidence*, p. 560.

<sup>53</sup> SNP 1985 SNP Annual Conference, *Resolution 29*. According to George Younger the Rosyth project would provide for 700 construction jobs during the earliest stages and rise to 1100 at its peak. *GH*, 2 May 1986, p. 1.

<sup>54</sup> *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 82 Col 169, July 1985; *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 78 Col 509, 10 May 1985.

cancelled, including work at the Ravenscraig plant which supplied steel for the Vanguard class.<sup>55</sup> There are numerous examples of this calculated message.<sup>56</sup> However, these admonitions did not prevent Kinnock from again pushing forward the fatal concept that the deterrent could be quickly dismantled by a Labour government in December 1986, while the National Peace Advisory Committee of the CPGB found a non-nuclear defence policy to be an 'absolute priority'.<sup>57</sup> Neither sentiment nurtured political success.

The rationalisation that accompanied the Scottish public's willingness to accept opportunities afforded by the system did not necessarily translate into support for the Conservatives themselves. The Conservatives had already lost electoral ground since 1979 and Thatcher's vicious attack on state dependency came as a rude awakening in Scotland because her policies on the state's role in economic regeneration came to be perceived as 'an attack on Scotland itself'.<sup>58</sup> Though the government maintained a comfortable hold on power with forty-two percent of the British vote after the 1987 election, the Scottish Conservatives suffered tremendously as they tumbled from twenty-one seats to ten that year.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, support for a Scottish Assembly was sustained as many had by this time rejected the implications of Thatcherism. Nevertheless, by the mid-1980s Trident had become less of a defence/nuclear issue in Scotland and more of an economic question. This was a hard lesson for the political

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<sup>55</sup> Ravenscraig died through the rationalization programme for privatized British steel. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 169; *Labour statistics*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 102 Col 1151, October 1986.

<sup>56</sup> *Trident*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 113 Col 145, 24 March 1987.

<sup>57</sup> *GH*, 10 June 1986, p. 2; *GCUA Labour, the bomb and Europe: A discussion paper issued by the National Peace Advisory Committee of the Communist Party*, CPGB Scottish Committee Archive (Nuclear Issues Folder).

<sup>58</sup> D. McCrone, 'Thatcherism in a Cold Climate' in Lindsay Paterson (ed.), *A Diverse Assembly: The Debate on Scottish Parliament* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1998), p. 207.

<sup>59</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 179.

left to learn, one that took Labour and the SDP-Liberal Alliance nearly a decade to master and an issue that other parties intentionally disregarded.

### **Trident arrives, the Cold War thaws**

Historian David Miller has stated that 'the Cold War does not have two convenient dates to mark its start and finish'. Yet it is reasonable to suggest that the opening of the Border separating Western and Eastern Germany on 9 November 1989, followed by the Supreme Soviet's break-up of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on 26 December 1991, were solid indicators of its conclusion.<sup>60</sup> Despite the absence of a clear timetable, within a global context the threat of nuclear exchange rapidly subsided and it was this crucial factor that allowed for an incalculable degree of Scottish concerns with the utilisation and/or retaliation with Trident to rest. The presence of Polaris had already outlived its controversy in Scotland, and Trident's situation became increasingly untroubled as time progressed. By this time The Campaign for a Scottish Assembly published *A Claim of Right for Scotland*, and, of limited interest to most Scots, Labour's Strathclyde European MP, Hugh McMahon, challenged the widening of Rhu Narrows for Trident's passage though 'the European Union...did not strive to have a common defence and security policy.'<sup>61</sup> Finally, the disarmament movement questioned Trident's purpose in the post-Cold War era, defence spending was drastically reduced and the Conservative government had undergone a change in leadership. All these events had no impact on the Trident issue whatsoever.

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<sup>60</sup> There is much academic speculation as to when the Cold War actually ended. The break-up resulted in eleven of the twelve republics forming the Commonwealth of the Independent States. Miller, *The Cold War*, p. xiv.

A growing number of residents no longer actively opposed the presence of nuclear weapons in Scottish lochs, though a principled opposition to the Trident system was sustained. In October 1990 Thatcher postponed the purchase of fourteen Trident missiles for budgetary purposes, but after the Poll Tax replaced the rates in Scotland in April 1988 she was dislodged from power in November 1990.<sup>62</sup> According to *The Times*, the change in premiership implied nothing for the Vanguard class as John Major considered it 'geopolitical folly' to hinder Trident's progress, emphasising that 'Trident is the minimum defence we need in this country and we must maintain Trident'.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, like that of the Falklands War, again tested the UK's defence posture against 'reality rather than hypothesis', and though the government proposed reductions in defence spending the *Options for Change* defence review excluded Trident from its considerations.<sup>64</sup> The Scottish reaction to most of these developments was apathetic, and this assumption is corroborated through yet further evidence.<sup>65</sup> When the US Polaris fleet withdrew from the Holy Loch on 5 November 1991 Strathclyde residents remained uninspired. Furthermore, the government's decision to order its fourth and

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<sup>61</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 180. Correspondence with Hugh McMahon, former European MP for Strathclyde, (01/11/02).

<sup>62</sup> *FT*, 1 October 1990, p. 3. Thatcher decided to replace the rating system of local taxes (based on the value of a house) with Community Charge (based on each adult resident in a house) in Scotland first. This became known as the poll tax due to people becoming suspicious that the Electoral register would be used for the purposes of collecting this tax. It was perceived as shifting the tax burden from the rich to the poor. Enforcement measures were thought to be draconian, unrest mounted and culminated in a number of riots. In London on 31 March 1990 300,000 protestors took to the streets and resulted in a successful leadership challenge by Michael Heseltine. See: D. Butler, *Failure in British government: the politics of the poll tax* (Oxford: OUP, 1994).

<sup>63</sup> *FT*, 7 October 1991, p. 1; *TT*, 21 December 1990, p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> The Government was insistent that *Options for Change* was a process rather than a one-off review. It began with an analysis of the strategic environment which was not disclosed to Parliament. R. Mottram, 'Options for Change: Process and Prospects', *RUSI Journal*, Spring 1991, pp 22-24; Third Report, *Options for Change: The Royal Navy*, paras 40 and 41, HC 266 of Session 1991-92.

<sup>65</sup> Despite this statement, it should be noted that the war in Kuwait was much more popular in Scotland than the Falklands.

final Trident SSBN stirred few emotions in Scotland though it left the British submarine scene vigorous.<sup>66</sup>

With minor complication the easing of tension between East and West, the ousting of the Scottish Conservatives and substantial progress with Trident permitted both Labour and the recently established Liberal Democrat Party to rescind their former policies on Trident. Kinnock maintained control of Labour after 1987, with Harvie noting that the party underwent a drastic 'modernisation' after it completely abandoned unilateralism.<sup>67</sup> By 1989 the project had consumed millions in taxpayer's contributions, and after Conservative seats in Scotland plummeted in 1987 it left Kinnock secure in his decision to strip away disarmament and other policies that had continued to repel voters.<sup>68</sup> Kinnock's reversal was also based on an appraisal of a changing world, and he understood that Trident became an issue of questionable importance to the wider UK electorate as it was economic policy, not defence, which was hurting the Conservatives most. Though the party in Scotland consistently maintained a symbolic non-nuclear defence policy to appease its followers, at some point Labour would have to convince the trade unions of this reversal. Nevertheless, while the Conservatives opened up a new line of attack on a leader who would abandon a deeply held belief like disarmament, another party also made revisions.

By March 1988 the Liberal-SDP Alliance had dropped joint leadership and had become the Liberal Democrat Party, led by Paddy Ashdown, former Royal Marine

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<sup>66</sup> 'Britain's submarine builders in the post Cold War era', *Naval Forces: International Forum for Maritime Power* (No. V/1992 Vol XII), p. 40.

<sup>67</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 180.

<sup>68</sup> Kinnock also created workable economic, health care, and environment policies. BBC News, *Bitter fight to a new dawn*, see:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in\\_depth/uk\\_politics/2000/labour\\_centenary/645202.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/in_depth/uk_politics/2000/labour_centenary/645202.stm)

officer-turned-MP for Yeovil.<sup>69</sup> Launched with 'nineteen MPs, a claim of 3,500 councillors, a declared membership of 100,000' and positioned to become the third largest third party in Britain, it supported the Scottish Constitutional Convention and was on the verge of breaking new ground in Scotland.<sup>70</sup> After the party exploited a number of local issues during the 1990 by-election they seized Kincardine and Deeside on a swing vote of 11.4 per cent. They also experienced little, if any, uneasiness when it was announced that Trident should not be equipped with greater firepower than its predecessor.<sup>71</sup> The Trident issue had by this time become an unrevivable topic for the Scottish electorate, and while both had made the transition from complete disarmament the SNP adjusted, the Greens held and the CPGB dissolved.

Appreciating the state of the disarmament issue, the SNP was forced to take a more practical approach to Trident by emphasising the system's impact on everyday life through its massive cost and direct consequences to civil service.<sup>72</sup> In October 1991 Alex Salmond, SNP leader and MP for Banff and Buchan, explained that the Scottish share of savings from cancelling the project could have constructed '12,000 new

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<sup>69</sup> Throughout the merger negotiations there was much disagreement between the two parties; however a policy statement was finally released on 18 January 1988 and on 23 January the Liberal Party Special Assembly at Blackpool voted by a large majority for the merger to go ahead. At the SDP Sheffield conference the Campaign for Social Democracy urged members not to attempt to block the vote. The Alliance elected a new leader, Paddy Ashdown, at the end of July 1988. Both parties were weakened in the following years by a failure to come to electoral agreement in fighting Parliamentary by-elections, local elections and European Parliamentary elections. *David Owen Papers*, D709 3.

<sup>70</sup> Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 30; Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party*, p. 201

<sup>71</sup> *TT*, 28 February 1992, p. 1. One issue the Liberal Democrats exploited was the threat to the Gordon Highlanders as a result of defence cuts. Cook, *A Short History of the Liberal Party*, p. 207.

<sup>72</sup> Colin Campbell, SNP defence spokesman, explained that 'one has to recognise that they [the electorate] probably gave more attention to health, education, etc. when they went to vote, than to Trident' and that 'the public had a perception in the 1980s that Trident was a necessary evil, and turned their backs on it.' Security was indeed a factor in Scotland but evidence suggests that employment was the primary issue of concern. Correspondence with Colin Campbell, SNP defence spokesman (17/04/02). After Labour reversed its policy on Trident the nationalists considered this as an 'unprincipled' and 'opportunistic' approach to defence policy. 1988 SNP Annual Conference, *Resolution 20*.

homes, 16 new hospitals and 177 new schools'.<sup>73</sup> In its 1992 manifesto the party continued with its conscientious stance by explaining that it 'would not tolerate Scottish waters being used as dumping grounds for weapons of mass destruction'.<sup>74</sup> Salmond had also temporarily resuscitated the constitutional issue, but in regards to Trident the thousands of employees at Coulport, Faslane and Rosyth, unresponsive to speculation, understood that these new hospitals and schools came at the expense of Scotland's defence industry, and, more importantly, their own livelihood.<sup>75</sup> Those parties seeking to decommission the system apparently failed to appreciate the influence of industrial politics and were interpreted as a threat to the thousands of families who relied on Scotland's role in the defence industry. Thus, the SNP remained in limbo while the situation for Labour and the Liberal Democrats showed some improvement.

With its Trident policy in no urgent need of attention the Liberal Democrats secured twenty seats in 1992 as Ashdown guided the party to its best general election result since the Liberal Party's success in 1935. The party was also able to move forward with a more radical programme for government in the run up to the 1997 election.<sup>76</sup> However, despite consistent objections from its Scottish contributors, Labour was noticeably reserved about its recent deviation in policy. Tucked away in the back of its 1992 manifesto, it just briefly mentioned that it would 'retain Britain's nuclear

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<sup>73</sup> *Her majesty's most gracious speech*, Parliamentary debates (Hansard), Vol 198 Col 908, 31 October 1991.

<sup>74</sup> SNP, *Independence in Europe: Make it happen now: 1992 General Election manifesto* (Edinburgh: SNP, 1992).

<sup>75</sup> Trident was a secure form of employment and residents were generally satisfied with Ministry of Defence and UKAEA safety precautions, tolerating the risks that came with a nuclear defence strategy. The current situation at Dounreay in Caithness is a prime example of this.

<sup>76</sup> In 1992 the party had twenty seats. While Labour moved to the political centre with reformed economic policies and multilateral disarmament, one of the Liberal Democrats key policies, to raise income tax by 1p on the pound to pay for education, was in stark contrast to Labour's pledge not to

capability, with the number of warheads no greater than the present total'.<sup>77</sup> Kinnock transformed policy-making structures and used new techniques in his campaigns but the party only remained in front of the Conservatives until Thatcher's downfall. Following the election of John Major as leader, a fourteen-point Labour lead in the November 1990 'Poll of Polls' became an eight-point Conservative lead in December.<sup>78</sup> Labour only gained a modest forty seats in 1992 while the SNP's vote rose to 22 per cent with the nationalists picking up 'no marginals' and 'still far behind Labour in the central belt'.<sup>79</sup> Although Scotland again sided with Labour the Conservatives managed to seize another five years in power, but because John Major's ephemeral popularity was generally attributed to the intense loathing of Thatcher, his government was seen more as a change in style if not in substance.

When HMS *Vanguard* arrived at Faslane it encountered little public hostility, but by the summer of 1993 the long-term employment that Trident was supposed to provide had failed to materialise for the Dockyard in Fife. The basic determinant that originally validated its presence in Scotland experienced drastic transformation. As has already been discussed in the Strathclyde chapter, in September 1982 central government's decision to surrender Trident's missile fitting and servicing responsibilities to the US Navy cancelled 1,500 jobs in Strathclyde. Yet thousands of jobs still remained. As has also been mentioned in Chapter Two, Rosyth received several confirmations of its responsibilities from Conservative governments but this did not prevent the relocation of services to England. This time thousands of jobs were lost. According to Dr. Alasdair Allan, Parliamentary Assistant to Alex Salmond,

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raise earnings related tax. C. Cook, *A short history of the Liberal Party 1900-2001* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), p. 211.

<sup>77</sup> *Its time to get Britain working again: Labour's 1992 manifesto* (London: Labour Party, 1992), p. 19.

the SNP assumed that if Scottish shores and waterways accommodated the system then the country should also retain most of the employment Trident was able to provide.<sup>80</sup> Initial plans for refits never materialised, and though it was one condition within the unspecified contract between the Thatcher government and Scotland, it appeared that circumstances beyond anyone's control led to painful adaptations. After more than a decade of intense controversy the sales pitch had collapsed, with those in Scotland left to host Trident for significantly less employment than original estimates suggested. In a cruel twist of fate, Fife interest groups that employed hypothetical formulas similar to that of the SNP also failed to realise that their own analysis would not apply to their immediate future. Though the end of the Cold War was unpredictable, Rosyth's experience did not elevate interest with Trident but it did serve to vilify the Conservatives and increase demands for a Scottish Assembly.

In the run-up to the 1997 general election the SNP appeared to be gaining momentum as the Trident issue threatened to re-arm itself. By May 1994 the government was forced to contemplate the days of Chevaline before an attempt to kill Trident in the US House of Representatives was defeated 226-169.<sup>81</sup> However, in September 1995 the SNP assumed that the international climate dictated a sensible reduction in Trident's capabilities with Salmond arguing that monies spent on an improved National Health Service (NHS) was preferable to funds being wasted on a system with no obvious targets.<sup>82</sup> Initiating a political firestorm the party wandered into hostile territory when it began to question Scotland's role in NATO and the

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<sup>78</sup> See E. A. Reitan, *Tory radicalism: Margaret Thatcher, John Major and the transformation of modern Britain 1979-1997* (Oxford: Rowan Littlefield Press, 1997).

<sup>79</sup> Rallings and Thrasher, *New Britain New Elections*, p. 37; Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*, p. 205.

<sup>80</sup> Correspondence with Dr Alasdair Allan, Parliamentary Assistant to Alexander Salmond (16/05/03); *Dockyards*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Col 457 Vol 227, 24 June 1993.

<sup>81</sup> See Introduction; *TT*, 21 May 1994, p. 2.

composition of a Scottish Defence Force. Andrew Findlay, Scottish Conservative defence spokesperson, countered the SNP's anti-Trident sentiment in April 1996 by arguing that without the system there would be 'no defence industry and no defence jobs'.<sup>83</sup> In another attempt to rouse Scottish concerns Menzies Campbell further condemned nationalist policy by arguing that 'the best you could say for the SNP proposals was that they might make sure more troops were available for the military tattoo during the Edinburgh festival'.<sup>84</sup> The nationalists had been brutally dissected over its defence policies, and employment issues remained. Yet their critics did not anticipate the July 1996 International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling which stated that the threat or use of nuclear weapons violated humanitarian law.<sup>85</sup> Did thirty-three years of unilateral policy finally begin to bring dividends for the SNP? A moral victory for the nationalists, Greens and the disarmament movement, it will be illustrated that this historic verdict implied little in terms of votes but certainly served as an embarrassment for central government and those parties recently convinced of Trident's applicability. Quandaries with local government, privatisation and other economic policies placed Major's premiership under fire. However, in the shadow of the ICJ verdict there may be at least some correlation between his visit to Faslane in August 1996 to preside over the decommissioning of HMS *Repulse*, the first delivery of Trident warheads and the return of the Stone of Scone that November.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> SNP A. Salmond, *Address to the 61<sup>st</sup> Annual National Conference*, Perth City Halls, 22 September 1995.

<sup>83</sup> Much like Ireland, Austria, Sweden and Finland the SNP's policy on NATO was that they would not contribute as long as it maintained a nuclear strategy. *TS*, 5 April 1996, p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> *TS*, 5 April 1996, p. 1.

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Five and J. Hawthorn, *Some Thoughts on an Independent Scottish Defence Force: Occasional Paper No. 1* (The Scottish Centre for War Studies, University of Glasgow, 1998).

<sup>86</sup> HMS *Repulse* was a Polaris submarine; Trident became the national deterrent. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 181.

## Trident and the Scottish Parliament

After eighteen years of Conservative rule the Labour Party was again returned to power in 1997, but by this time Trident's role in British security was assured. Earlier on the unforeseen death of party leader John Smith in 1994 left Tony Blair to challenge the trade unions and complete the party's burial of disarmament, which he did successfully. Liberal Democrat Menzies Campbell, Foreign Affairs and Defence Spokesperson, also argued that the national deterrent 'could function at a reduced level of readiness'.<sup>87</sup> By this time the Commons had become well stocked with Trident's advocates, with the Major government crushed after the 1997 general election by losing an astounding 171 seats, taking only 30.7 per cent of the vote.<sup>88</sup> Winning a total of 418 seats, it was Labour's attacks on issues such as Conservative divisions over Europe and its promise of a referendum on Scottish devolution that had more to do with Major's defeat rather than the solitary issue of Trident.<sup>89</sup> In Scotland alone, Labour was also able to manage a commanding fifty-six seats.<sup>90</sup> Phil Gallie, Conservative MSP for the south of Scotland, believed that Trident was not a 'factor in the loss of support for the Tories', though Rebecca Johnson of the Acronym Institute for Disarmament Diplomacy asserted that 'the Conservatives inability to provide a

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<sup>87</sup> See Chapter Four: Civil Society and Public Opinion. Disarmament had left John Smith with unpleasant memories and Conservative MPs had challenged him on employment provided by the nuclear deterrent. A. McSmith, *John Smith: A Life 1938-1994* (London: Mandarin Press, 1994), p. 177. *Liberal Democrats: A Short History*, p. 2. Liberal Democrat Party, *Shared Security* (Policy Paper No. 6, 1994), p. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Rallings and Thrasher, *New Britain New Elections*, p. 37.

<sup>89</sup> Personal scandals before their campaign and the government's record also did not assist the Conservatives in 1997. Rallings and Thrasher, *New Britain New Elections*, p. 37; Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 182.

<sup>90</sup> Rallings and Thrasher, *New Britain New Elections*, p. 37.

stance [on Trident]’, left the party flustered by its inability to ‘monitor the pulse of the voting public’.<sup>91</sup> Historians would likely favour Gallie’s assumption.

By this time some Liberal Democrats believed there was no reason to maintain Trident as a status symbol. However, this should not imply a willingness to decommission as their 1997 manifesto pledged to ‘retain Britain’s basic nuclear capability...[and] restrict the number of nuclear warheads...to the same number as previously deployed on Polaris’.<sup>92</sup> Like Labour, a minority share of Liberal Democrat MPs, and, eventually MSPs, openly opposed Trident but by this time current policy had assisted the party in doubling its numbers. Winning forty-six seats in the Commons, it was the highest number won by a third party since 1926.<sup>93</sup> Still, complete disarmament had its champions. The SNP rejected Labour’s devolution scheme in 1997, as a Scottish Assembly would be powerless to remove either Trident from the Clyde or expended submarines from Rosyth.<sup>94</sup> The Scottish Green Party was also ‘fundamentally opposed to the billions of pounds wasted’ on Trident, but the SNP’s manifesto promised to negotiate a ‘phased but complete’ withdrawal of Trident and planned to invest these savings in conventional defence, health and education.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Interview with Phil Gallie, Conservative MSP for the south of Scotland (16/04/02). Johnson, R., *British Perspectives on the future of Nuclear Weapons* (Washington DC: Henry L. Stimson Centre, 1998), p. 12.

<sup>92</sup> Liberal Democrat Party, *Make the Difference: The 1997 General Election*. After 1999 the Liberal Democrats emphasised that Trident should be open to review. Liberal Democrat Party, *Global Response to Global Problems* (Policy Paper 35, 2000), p. 7; W. Wallace, *Why vote Liberal Democrat* (London: Penguin Books, 1997), p. 112

<sup>93</sup> Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 40; C. Cook, *A short history of the Liberal Party 1900-2001*, p. 211.

<sup>94</sup> This was only one of several reasons. SNP, *Best for Scotland: A Real Scottish Parliament* (August 1996), p. 4.

<sup>95</sup> The Greens would decommission Trident immediately if given the opportunity. Also see *Nuclear ‘Triple Whammy’ facing Scotland* (SNP Archives), 27 December 1996; *Green Party Executive members join SNP – Party offers best way forward for Scotland* (SNP Archives), 17 December 1996; The SNP believed that phased withdrawal allowed for the transition from the nuclear defence industry to an alternative source of employment. SNP, *Yes we can win the best for Scotland: the SNP General Election Manifesto 1997*; Scottish Green Party Election Manifesto, *Scotland’s Future: Green of Grey?* (Edinburgh: 13 February 1997).

The nationalists gained two seats and only slightly elevated their vote in 1997, but they were now second to Labour in Scotland. With the Scottish Parliament on the foreseeable horizon they intended to pursue the Trident issue, and Labour's track record on disarmament, to the fullest extent.<sup>96</sup> The results were questionable.

Labour's 1997 manifesto promised to readdress the Scottish constitutional question although some Scots MPs believed that a Labour victory should be mandate enough to deliver the Parliament, as the SNP did not represent a tactical vote with a majority of Scots voting Labour in 1979, 1983, 1987 and 1992. The referendum was therefore one of the first acts of the Blair government, and on 11 September 1997 the result demonstrated that devolution was indeed the settled will of the Scottish people. A total of 74.3 per cent voted for the Parliament and 63.5 per cent endorsed its tax-varying powers, indicating that both the middle and professional classes who had been so doubtful in 1979 were now convinced otherwise.<sup>97</sup> Years of antipathy to Thatcherism and Conservative rule strengthened this sentiment, with the proportion of support effectively silencing any opposition. Either a political masterstroke on Labour's behalf, or pure coincidence, the system was not permitted to be a factor in 1979 and the party took confidence from Scottish disinterest with Trident as the bill was published in mid-December 1997.<sup>98</sup> However, though some have claimed that Trident was 'an embarrassment' for the party due to its previous record on disarmament, after Scotland confirmed its desire for greater autonomy Defence Secretary George Robertson emphasised that there would be no return to the

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<sup>96</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 182.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182. Also see C. Harvie and P. Jones, *The road to home rule: images of Scotland's cause* (Edinburgh: Polygon Press, 2000)

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

‘unilateralism that kept Labour out of power’ for so many years.<sup>99</sup> Comfortable with its decisions and certainly aware that a solid majority of Scots still rejected independence, elections for the resurrected Parliament were scheduled for 6 May 1999.

Given the extraordinary nature of SSBN and SLBM systems it was understandable that central government would exert absolute control over their deployment and usage, even if that strained relations with Scotland. Yet in the public’s eye, nuclear disarmament often meant taking the ‘Great’ out of Britain, just as the public was sometimes convinced that possession of Trident could somehow put it back in.<sup>100</sup> Therefore, the intensity of the nuclear weapons question often varied according to the international climate and the state of the British economy, with Trident generally considered a necessary component of national security, foreign policy, spending plans and employment. However, because central government frequently linked the system to jobs, most notably in Scotland, there was a limited impetus for its removal either in times of war or peace. Trident was perceived as a provider of sorts. It deterred aggression, but it also put food on the table. Under these circumstances, those politicians that tolerated Trident often chose to remain inconspicuous, and those opposed to the system were reluctant to tamper with the issue. Therefore, if handled carefully the personal consequences for Scotland’s politicians remained minimal, but in certain instances it also provided astonishing career opportunities.

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<sup>99</sup> M. Mort, *Building the Trident Network: A Study of the Enrolment of People, Knowledge and Machines* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2002), p. 1; *TI*, 3 October 1997, p. 2

<sup>100</sup> Wainwright, *Labour: The Tale of Two Parties*, p. 81.

From 1959-1964, the Polaris programme coincided with the first phase of Conservative decline. This was a time when CND swept like muirburn through Scottish secondary schools and the 'baby-boomer' generation rapidly evolved, either for or against.<sup>101</sup> However, because the system embodied a highly divisive issue, a number of Labour politicians attempted to place themselves midway between the Labour left and the Conservative right. Arguably, former party leader John Smith laid the groundwork for the prototypical Labour politician of the 1990s. When considering Polaris nearly two decades earlier he is quoted as saying that there were 'hawks who think that no cuts should be made' to Polaris, and 'doves who want to make cuts for the sake of cuts'. Smith did not know 'what species of bird is halfway between a hawk and a dove', but he fancied the posture 'of that bird'.<sup>102</sup> After its transition from left to centre, Labour's lengthy stumble into the middle path brought about proficiency with the issue and high dividends to some of its members.

Labour governments were committed to seeking collective security on the widest scale, yet it appeared that CND membership was one of several prerequisites for assembling an extraordinary career in politics. Tony Blair was a member of parliamentary CND in 1986. Former CND member Robin Cook was a Labour MP for Edinburgh Central between 1974 and 1983, held frontbench posts for the party, became Blair's Foreign Secretary in 1994 and took his place as Leader of the House of Commons in 2001.<sup>103</sup> Dunoon's George Robertson, one-time opponent of Polaris and member of the SNP, was also Labour's Defence Secretary by the time of full

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<sup>101</sup> Recommendation from Christopher Harvie (25 November 2004).

<sup>102</sup> As a 'dove', he wanted defence spending tailored to what the economy could afford. As a 'hawk' he defended the highly controversial decision to resume testing Polaris. McSmith, *John Smith*, p. 60.

<sup>103</sup> Cook was appointed a spokesman on economic affairs, followed by a long spell as Shadow Health Secretary. Foot, *Dr. Strangelove*, p. 171.

Trident deployment in 1999 and eventually became Secretary General of NATO.<sup>104</sup> Their accomplishments with the disarmament question can be attributed to the example provided by John Smith. Furthermore, both Cook and Robertson presented the *Strategic Defence Review* to Parliament in July 1998. They skilfully balanced retention of Trident with arms control but revoked all previous commitments which might appear to oblige Britain to take any unilateral action.<sup>105</sup> Despite Labour's abandonment of a deeply held belief like disarmament, this had little influence over Scottish elections for Parliament.

During the SNP's campaign for the Scottish Parliament the party allowed for at least one critical oversight with Trident. Schedule 5, Part 1, Paragraph 9 (1) of the Scotland Act 1998 clearly indicates that Westminster retained all powers and responsibilities for all defence matters.<sup>106</sup> Though it was not an issue open for discussion the SNP launched a campaign against Labour, its slippery relationship with Trident and the system's immunity from Scottish objections. The SNP and the SCND had already voiced their opposition to Scotland's annual contribution of £135 million of the £1.5 billion spent on the system, while Alex Neil, SNP's vice convenor on policy, suggested that the Scottish Parliament should withhold funding.<sup>107</sup> The nationalists also addressed lingering employment concerns, but its strategies were confused and attention to detail was left wanting. According to Frank Purdie, Faslane Shop Steward, Lloyd Quinan, SNP candidate for Dumbarton in 1999, spoke of

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<sup>104</sup> Recommendation from Christopher Harvie (25 November 2004).

<sup>105</sup> Foot, *Dr. Strangelove*, p. 171.

<sup>106</sup> Reserved matters included the defence of the realm; the naval, military, or air force of the Crown, including reserve forces; visiting forces; international headquarters and defence organisations; trading with the enemy and enemy property. *Scotland Act 1998*, Schedule 5, Part 1, Paragraph 9 (1).

<sup>107</sup> 'SNP join Scottish CND in Edinburgh: Only independent parliament can remove Trident', (SNP Archives), 18 May 1997; *TS*, 27 September 1997, p. 1; 'Government say no more missiles to be

bringing work for trains and fishery patrol boats to Faslane as an alternative to the system, while the SNP candidate for Rosyth also promised the same. Not only was this contradictory, but, in geographical terms, it was impractical for boats from the north east of Scotland to travel to Faslane when Rosyth was closer.<sup>108</sup> So seriously flawed was this policy that proposals for a Defence Diversification Laboratory and Management Division could not be taken seriously by the electorate.<sup>109</sup>

Labour in Scotland also voted to scrap Trident at its 1998 conference in Perth and while George Younger emphasised that the party thought 'it would not be smart to continue procuring the system', external pressure from parties like the SNP forced the party to re-declare its stance to the electorate.<sup>110</sup> According to Brian Taylor, political editor for BBC Scotland, Labour in Scotland had frequently voted for disarmament in the past, but this range of opinion was not unique as it also persisted in England. Arguably, the divisions on this issue were sharper in Scotland for three fundamental reasons: the party in Scotland was institutionally more left; Trident was sited in Scotland; and there were alternatives in Scottish politics as the SNP and Scottish Green Party vigorously opposed the system.<sup>111</sup> These factors ultimately heightened the issue for Labour. The party therefore tended to default slightly more towards an anti-nuclear position because it was driven by other outside imperatives. However, by 1998 the issue became formulaic for the Scottish party and Trident no longer

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*purchased, yet seven more are ordered-SNP demand an explanation'* (SNP Archives), 16 October 1997.

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Purdie (02/06/03).

<sup>109</sup> Both were to fund the instruction, research and development in areas affected by defence restructuring. SNP, *Proposals for a defence agency*, November 1998.

<sup>110</sup> Taylor, *The Scottish Parliament*, p. 146. This was according to Sir George Younger. *Smart procurement initiatives*, Hansard (Parliamentary Debates), Vol 308 Col 4, 9 March 1998. The Scottish Socialist Party, formed in 1998, also opposed Trident. *Scottish Labour Action*, available: <http://www.holyrood.org.uk/sla/s98mar.htm>.

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Brian Taylor, political editor for BBC Scotland (29/02/03).

resonated with voters; there were in the past routine demands for its withdrawal by Labour in Scotland but these calls were routinely ignored and Scots MPs did not expect anything more.<sup>112</sup> The situation was similar for Liberal Democrats north of the Border, which also had 'leftish and Green sections', and while their opponents often referred to this as hypocrisy these parties preferred to label this as pragmatic politics.<sup>113</sup> Susceptible to sharp criticisms, Labour's participation in the creation of the Declaration of Faslane could only make for a hollow and highly symbolic gesture.

With roughly 10,000 signatures collected, on 11 May 1998 Alex Salmond, Cathy Jamieson of Scottish Labour Party executive and the Church of Scotland launched the Declaration.<sup>114</sup> Though nothing more than a gesture, the statement reads as follows:

We, the people of Scotland,  
do hereby make it known  
that we will no longer tolerate  
nuclear weaponry on our land  
or in our waters.  
In now expressing our clear will,  
we mandate all our political representatives  
to rid Scotland of Trident.

However, as has been already stated, external influences, and political aspirations, were responsible for Labour's participation and the Scotland Act 1998 ultimately left their assertion meaningless. The party was incapable of effectively deflecting accusations of disingenuousness, but it is irrefutable that it had to consider civilian and Service employees who, along with families and friends, could have assembled a similar number of signatures for Trident's retention in Strathclyde alone. This crucial factor, coinciding with overwhelming civic disinterest, spared Labour from further

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<sup>112</sup> The Labour Council maintained opposition to Trident with little complication.

<sup>113</sup> Leftist tendency should not be over-exaggerated. Interview with Taylor (29/22/03).

humiliation though the SNP was ahead by ten per cent in the polls by July 1998.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, just months previous to the Scottish parliamentary elections Labour endured a battery of criticism over Trident from local and national media.

Based on the premise that there had been a relaxation of tension since the end of the Cold War, in July 1998 the government's *Strategic Defence Review* confirmed Labour's commitment to Trident with the system subjected to 'minor rather than fundamental' changes.<sup>116</sup> This may have played some part in the SNP's recent success in the polls but the release of this document previous to the Scottish elections also featured the Blair government as confident both in its decisions, and with the Scottish electorate. This assertion was bolstered by one highly significant event. Just days previous to the vote for Scotland's first democratically elected Parliament, central government was so comfortable with Trident's presence in Scotland that it actually permitted the fourth Vanguard class boat, HMS *Vengeance*, to make its maiden voyage to Loch Long.<sup>117</sup> Under heavy attack from the Scottish media, Labour in Scotland would have to perform.<sup>118</sup>

When considering Trident there are numerous examples of the print media's assault on Labour, but in one of his more critical articles Ian Bell of *The Scotsman* argued that within the party:

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<sup>114</sup> Interview with Ainslie (25/03/03).

<sup>115</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 184.

<sup>116</sup> Trident's capacity would be reduced to forty-eight warheads per boat. T. Dodd and M. Oakes, *The Strategic Defence Review White Paper* (International Affairs and Reference Section: Cmd Paper 3999), p. 35.

<sup>117</sup> HMS *Vengeance* was greeted by only a handful of protesters in the loch, see Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement.

<sup>118</sup> *GH*, 22 February 1999, p. 2; *SH*, 21 February 1999, p. 4; *GH*, 3 March 1999, p. 2; *GH*, 30 April 1999, p. 2.

CND memberships were allowed to quietly lapse, and Britain took delivery of the Pentagon's latest line in thermonuclear abattoirs. By this time, Labour voters should have been accustomed to this...It was a Labour government that covered the retreat from empire by insisting on its share of nuclear hardware, just as it was a Labour government, led by a former CND supporter, that spoke about the possibility of nuking Saddam Hussein – with deepest regrets, of course.<sup>119</sup>

Yet even the most acrimonious of criticisms failed to rekindle serious public interest with Trident, and results from the 6 May 1999 election confirmed this. During the parliamentary election those who supported Trident gained a majority of seats. The Liberal Democrats captured seventeen seats, the Conservatives managed eighteen, but Labour, despite its complex relationship with the system, was able to secure a reasonable total of fifty-six seats within the Scottish Parliament.<sup>120</sup> Those who opposed Trident took the remainder. Both the Green and newly established Scottish Socialist Party acquired one seat each, and the SNP, experiencing a swing since the 1997 election, accumulated a respectable thirty-five seats.<sup>121</sup> This was a bitter disappointment for the nationalists, and their position on Trident did little, if anything, to assist them.<sup>122</sup> Similar to 1999, the Trident issue would also have no relevance whatsoever in the 2003 Scottish elections.

## Conclusion

First and foremost it is essential to understand that through their ballots the Scottish electorate was given numerous opportunities to voice their opposition to Trident throughout the Cold War, amidst its thaw and upon the resurrection of the Scottish

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<sup>119</sup> *TS*, 3 February 1999, p. 4.

<sup>120</sup> Rallings and Thrasher, *New Britain New Elections*, p. 37.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

Parliament. Civilian employees at Coulport, Faslane and Rosyth, and those with a specific interest in national security, were indeed relieved to see the Trident system delivered. In British society political policy is frequently dictated by the disposition of the electorate, although there are numerous examples to the contrary, and because resistance to Trident never fully matured in Scotland it left Conservatives able to complete the system against only moderate resistance. Anti-Trident demonstrations similar to that of the anti-Polaris movement, the 1990 poll tax riots or the 2003 invasion of Iraq, three examples of highly contentious decisions, never fully transpired in Scotland. Therefore, Scots generally held some aversion toward the location of the system rather than fully rejecting the act of deterrence. Having grown accustomed to the presence of the SSBN through Polaris, this was especially true in the midst of the Cold War. Perhaps most importantly, it becomes apparent that the silent majority was responsible for Trident's occupancy as the Scottish electorate consistently highlighted Trident's status as an issue of lesser consideration through its perpetual fidelity to the Labour Party. Policy turnaround brought few, if any, serious repercussions to the party. Finally, both the Commons and the British electorate ultimately overruled any Scottish apprehensions with Trident, as Scotland was a quasi-autonomous state. Had this become problematic the nationalists most likely would have experienced at least some noticeable growth in support. Conceivably, this explains the Blair government's confidence after 1997, and though Scots supported home rule this should not imply that their sense of Britishness was not intact. This being understood it is undeniable that Trident was once a highly divisive political issue that rapidly lost its potency in Scotland.

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<sup>122</sup> Harvie has stated, 'the decrease in oil prices, farm and fish products and microchips that assisted Labour as the SNP was forced to admit that the economics of independence appeared unreliable' Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 184.

In the simplest of terms one must recognise that when a weapon system such as Trident is solicited and released, both parties, that being the US and UK governments, have a tremendous responsibility in ensuring that the system is implemented properly, maintained to the highest of standards and secure in its location. Callaghan exercised discretion when he opted to withhold the Trident issue from the 1979 referendum as he probably wished to gauge the mood of the Scottish electorate. Had the SNP experienced some rogue wave of unexpected success after the referendum it would have complicated a deal over Trident, as central government would have had to consider the possibility of relocation. For Thatcher the situation was far less complex. The referendum failed and in one quick stroke she was able to wipe away any question of Scotland's constitutional status, securing an essential requirement in her multifaceted dealings with the US government. This point should not be overstated as the Conservatives were simply opposed to devolution, but repealing the Act also answered any questions either the Pentagon or the Carter and Reagan administrations might have had regarding the situation in Scotland. This supposition is confirmed through the US Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as it revealed that Reagan prepared secret plans to counter the prospect of Kinnock winning power in 1987. American diplomats had briefed the President on two possible outcomes of the election, and a letter prepared to Thatcher was eulogistic while a newly appointed Labour Prime Minister was to receive only a brief statement concentrating on the party's intentions of expelling American SSBNs from Scotland. Reagan's message to Kinnock was to be fairly short, in the vein of 'we both know where we stand, so let's not do anything abrupt on defense.'<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> United States Department of State, *British Elections, Congratulatory Messages*, Section 01 of 02, (Doc\_1987LONDON11818).

Attempting to capitalise on the agitation that the GLCM and Trident initially inspired throughout the wider UK, left-wing parties dramatically overestimated Scottish intolerance for the SSBN and clearly miscalculated the British electorate's demeanour in terms of security. Throughout the 1980s these parties suffered tremendously under Trident's wrath as the system's enormous price tag, its implications for the arms race and British dependence on American technology did not translate into issues that served their cause. For Britain, both the Falklands War and the Soviet Union's installation of SS-20s demonstrated the need for greater security, while decommissioning also implied lost wages in Scotland. Therefore, in the midst of the Cold War a majority of the British electorate did not reject Thatcher's intention to maintain an effective deterrent. While parties similar to the CPGB and SNP adopted a firm, conscientious stance on Trident, at that time Labour and the SDP-Liberal Alliance had misinterpreted wide-spread anti-nuclear sentiment as a majority of the electorate were more comfortable with the notion of Trident in Scotland rather than cruise missiles in England. This view left disarmament parties and the movement in Scotland vulnerable as Britain chose not to abandon the concept of nuclear deterrence.

During correspondence with Sir Malcolm Rifkind, he explained that, 'I do not myself believe that the Trident programme contributed in any significant way to the difficulties faced by the Government in Scotland.'<sup>124</sup> This appears to be undeniable as Thatcher's views on state dependency had much more to do with calls for devolution than the Trident issue itself. Taylor has explained that by the 1990s Trident became a totemic issue for certain parties and their activists. There was principled opposition to the deterrent and its presence in Scotland by Scottish parties, but the issue had been

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<sup>124</sup> Correspondence with Sir Malcolm Rifkind (Sheila Dalglish for Sir Malcolm Rifkind) (22/04/02).

arguably subdued by the main UK political parties where the issue 'may have rather experienced a function of stasis'.<sup>125</sup> Scottish political opposition to Trident also experienced a major disadvantage when the main parties at Westminster all broadly accepted the independent deterrent, with little motivation for ventilating the issue within the Commons. Equally, there was little scope for innovative opposition on the part of those in Scotland who resented Trident's presence, because of the lack of a Scottish Parliament. Rehearsing and repeating the same arguments against the system ultimately failed to alter the political structure, though this did not imply that the Trident issue in Scotland was insignificant. However, avenues for publicising the issue in a fashion that provoked new attention were relatively constrained.<sup>126</sup>

Finally, Westminster retained all powers and responsibilities for defence matters after the resurrection of the Scottish Parliament and the majority of its electorate found no difficulty with this particular form of intervention. It has already been made clear that in 1997 Trident no longer resonated with the Scottish electorate, and, as has also been explained, the Blair government's support for a nuclear defence strategy was not an explanation for Scottish demands for greater autonomy. It is presumed that Labour was comforted by Scottish disinterest with Trident after the Scotland Act 1998 was published, and this assumption is verified by Labour's declaration that it would not revisit the unilateralism that once debilitated the party. With the system of little concern for a majority of Scots, the issue suppressed within the House of Commons, and the Scottish Parliament irrelevant it is therefore important to understand what exactly transpired within Scottish civil society to assist in achieving these results.

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<sup>125</sup> Interview with Taylor, (14/05/02).

<sup>126</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Four: Civil Society and Public Opinion

The definitions of 'civil society' are varied and contentious, but for working purposes the description provided by American historian Michael Waltzer may be of assistance. He describes it as the 'space of uncoerced human association...formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology'.<sup>1</sup> Civil society might therefore be considered a social process that produces a 'mutual understanding and mediates state and market pressures', but can take a number of forms.<sup>2</sup> The roots of Scottish civil society reside within the Scottish Enlightenment, and up until the twentieth century Scotland still preferred to protect and nurture its own unique institutions. Due to Scotland's status as a region within a unitary state questions of sovereignty lingered, but because cultural nationalism did not support a political agenda Scots generally accepted their quasi-autonomous status after 1945.<sup>3</sup> During this period Labour's welfare state was under construction with central government making a vocal commitment to planning and reconstruction. Yet there was an upsurge of Scottish nationalism in the form of the Covenant movement, and suspicions of too much Westminster control persisted. As the economy began to falter tensions became particularly strained by the 1960s.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, some argued that it was this arrangement which allowed for the SSBN to remain in Scotland. This chapter will assess its influence over the various components of civil society using invaluable documentation provided by leading members of Scotland's religious community, the STUC and the NFLA. Scotland's local government, media, trade unions and people served as the administration, information, labour and lifeblood for this social process. However, because religion,

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<sup>1</sup> N. Deakin, *In Search of Civil Society* (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> L. Paterson, *The autonomy of modern Scotland* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1994), p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> See Paterson's publication in its entirety.

law and education were the three traditional cornerstones of civil society it is with these subjects that we will begin.

### **The Christian peace movement (Scotland's religious community)**

Chronological in structure, this section is a selective overview of the Christian peace movement in Scotland and focuses mainly on their opposition to Trident though the roots of their hostility dated from Polaris. In Scotland Presbyterianism was safeguarded as the national religion after 1707, although there were still bitter doctrinal divisions within the Established Church during the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These led to schisms, notably the Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843, which led to the formation of the evangelical Free Church. The dissenting denominations had a strong influence on the electoral success of the Liberal Party in Scotland from the mid-nineteenth century up to 1914. Heavy industrialisation and urbanisation also contributed to church expansion and denominational diversity. The Roman Catholic community became particularly prominent as a result of Irish immigration. Yet while the United Free Church and the Church of Scotland eventually reunited in 1929, as the twentieth century progressed the Christian faith continued to experience a multifaceted 'crisis' of diffusion, declining religious practice and the waning of people's connections with churches.<sup>5</sup>

Callum G. Brown, the social historian, has revealed that various forms of economic and technological prosperity may have inspired a public disconnection. While the Church of Scotland and the Catholic Church had 1,248,000 and 810,000

communicants respectively by 1965, in 1995 these figures dropped to 698,00 and 743,000.<sup>6</sup> Of course, the appearance of the Polaris and Trident SSBNs in Scottish lochs can not certainly be attributed to this decline, but it is reasonable to suggest that these systems may have somehow encouraged an unspecified number to believe that human destiny had somehow fallen into the hands of mankind. While many could argue that God's influence was hijacked by the implementation of these technologies, the threat of nuclear holocaust did inspire some within Scotland's religious community to confront the SSBN through the teachings of Christ.

It should be cautioned that the Christian faith has not always rejected the applicability of warfare, and that, in historiographical terms, opposition to any form of violent conflict is only a recent development. According to Alastair Ramage, ordained minister for the Church of Scotland, around 350 BC the Bishop Athanasius wrote that it was 'praiseworthy to kill enemies in war'.<sup>7</sup> It was Augustine, another supreme theologian, who formulated the doctrine of the Just War in the early fifth century. Evidence from Ramage has revealed that Augustine insisted that, amongst a number of conditions, war must have peace and justice as its aim; that only rulers have the authority to start wars; and enemies must be regarded as human beings.<sup>8</sup> It was not until the seventeenth century that the Mennonites and the Society of Friends, or Quakers, sought to establish a pacifist view of war; with America's Brethren of Christ supporting this position in the eighteenth century. Mainstream churches were slow to reject Augustine's theory. However, the First World War inspired Anglicans,

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<sup>5</sup> G. Walker, 'Varieties of Scottish Protestant Identity', in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.) *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), p. 250; C.G. Brown, *Religion and Society in Scotland since 1707* (EUP: Edinburgh, 1997) in its entirety.

<sup>6</sup> Brown., *Religion and Society in Scotland*, p.161.

<sup>7</sup> A. Ramage, 'The Role of Churches in the Peace Movement' in Brian P. Jamison (ed.) *Scotland and the Cold War* (Dunfermline: Cualann Press, 2003), p. 32.

Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Quakers and Methodists to assemble the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) in 1914, and by 1937 church peace groups in Scotland formed the Scottish Council of Christian Pacifists.<sup>9</sup> The following year the Rev. George Macleod, then a parish minister in Glasgow, founded an ecumenical Christian community on Iona committed to 'seeking new ways of living the Gospel in modern world', and by 1944 all these groups came together to form FOR Scotland in 1944.<sup>10</sup> Though the SCND and Trident Ploughshares were not pacifist groups, both the Christian peace movement and the disarmament movement would work together for a common cause.

While it was Macleod who campaigned longest against nuclear weapons, in 1965 Roger Gray, member of the Iona Community from 1963, advocated that the Church of Scotland should take a more proactive stance against these arms. By 1976, the Church did just that and argued that the stockpiling of nuclear weapons threatened the future of humanity.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, a correspondence with Rev. Alan D. McDonald, Convenor of the Committee on Church and Nation of the General Assembly, revealed that the church originally believed Britain's deterrent could someday act as a source of leverage within disarmament negotiations. According to McDonald, the Assembly seemed to reflect two opposing views, for they continued to support a need for a nuclear force but urged the government not to proceed with Trident. This contradiction led to change, and by 1981 there was a reversal in policy as the Church

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<sup>8</sup> Interview with Alastair Ramage, Curator for the Heatherbank museum of Social Work and ordained minister for the Church of Scotland (27/11/03).

<sup>9</sup> Ramage, *The Role of Churches*, p. 32

<sup>10</sup> Correspondence with Norman Shanks, Leader of the Iona Community (09/18/02).

<sup>11</sup> ADM Church of Scotland, Church and Nation Committee Report (Edinburgh: 2000).

and Nation Committee Report opposed central government's decision to replace Polaris, going as far as to recommend complete disarmament.<sup>12</sup>

In general terms the Scottish Episcopal Church and the Quakers involvement with Trident was noticeably radical compared to that of larger denominations. In February 1982 members of the Iona Community and the Quakers discussed disarmament issues in an unprecedented three-hour interview with Kremlin officials, and by April the Rev. Ian Miller of Dumbarton Presbytery accused churches of being as culpable as politicians if Trident was not stopped.<sup>13</sup> Though the Iona Community was highly proactive, reactions from the Quakers and Episcopalians came quickly and clearly demonstrated the conviction of these groups. Yet one should note that the Catholic Church did make its objection clear. In March 1982 a statement by the Roman Catholic Bishops' Conference of Scotland explained that Trident's ability to inflict indiscriminate destruction upon whole cities with their inhabitants was 'a crime against God and nature'.<sup>14</sup> However, while Maver has noted that Catholics became 'more active in the Scottish political mainstream' after the end of World War One, larger denominations were less vocal and more methodical in declaring their views on Trident just as they were with Augustine's theory.

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<sup>12</sup> Correspondence with Rev. Alan D. McDonald, Convenor of the Committee on Church and Nation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (01/09/02).

<sup>13</sup> Members of the British disarmament movement were also present. *TC*, February 1982, p.1; *GII*, 12 April 1982, p.2

<sup>14</sup> CMO Contributors included Gordon Joseph Cardinal Gray, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh, Thomas Joseph Winning, Archbishop of Glasgow Stephen McGill, Bishop of Paisley, Francis Thomson, Bishop of Motherwell, Colin MacPherson, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, Mario Joseph Conti, Bishop of Aberdeen, Vincent Logan, Bishop of Dunkeld, Maurice Taylor, Bishop of Galloway, James Monaghan, Titular Bishop of Cell Ausaille, Joseph Devine, Titular Bishop of Voli, Charles McDonald Renfrew, Titular Bishop of Abula. Statement by the Roman Catholic Bishops Conference of Scotland, *Disarmament and Peace* (Craighead: 16 March 1982).

Over the course of three years the Church of Scotland made several attempts to persuade central government to reconsider its position on Trident, with the Assembly stressing the need for disarmament well into 1983 and this position finally included in Deliverances at that time.<sup>15</sup> However, for the Catholic Church there were considerations that deserved undivided attention. Individual bishops had attempted to persuade governments of various hues to appreciate the resources expended in maintaining a nuclear arsenal, but evidence provided by Peter Kearney of the Catholic Media Office revealed that the church did have misgivings about the methods of civil disobedience that were used during protest.<sup>16</sup> For example, the church was careful not to condone acts by anti-abortion demonstrators, and it did not believe that people chaining themselves to railings or disrupting life for workers going about their lawful business was an effective means of changing hearts and minds.<sup>17</sup> Behind this logic, Scotland's Catholic community generally resided in the west of Scotland, home to the Trident deterrent, with civil disobedience at Faslane having the potential to turn Catholics against one another. To some extent this theory also applies to the Scottish Episcopal Church.

According to Christine McIntosh, a former Secretary of the Vestry for Dumbarton's Presbytery, the Church 'had not done enough to resist the deterrent' due to the Presbytery's location.<sup>18</sup> Though in 1983 Rev. Ralph Smith of Dumbarton Presbytery likened the moral dilemma of people who took jobs at Coulport to the gas men at Nazi concentration camps, many clerics resisted a commitment against Trident because

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<sup>15</sup> Correspondence with McDonald (01/09/02).

<sup>16</sup> Correspondence with Peter Kearney, Catholic Media Office (19/08/02)

<sup>17</sup> CMO Statement by the Bishops of Scotland on the Faslane nuclear base, 14 February 2001; Correspondence with Kearney (19/08/02).

<sup>18</sup> Correspondence with Christine McIntosh, former member of the Provincial Synod, Lay Representative and Secretary of the Vestry (26/08/02).

they felt they had to minister to all regardless of politics.<sup>19</sup> Other denominations were free of such complication. Lacking the structural complexity that hindered both the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland, rapid response was a luxury that smaller denominations were free to exploit. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that each demonstrated considerable foresight when considering the Trident issue.

Because the public's interest in Trident began to wane before the opening of the German border in November 1989, and plummeted still further after the break-up of the USSR in December 1991, the importance of the Christian peace movement's contributions to disarmament groups cannot be over-stated. By 1989 the Labour Party abandoned the disarmament issue altogether, and with the SCND experiencing steady numerical decline by 1988 Helen Steven had reminded the Iona Community 'to keep up pressure and focus increasingly on Trident over the next few years'.<sup>20</sup> According to Norman Shanks, former leader of the Community, since day one the group had consistently voiced its opposition to the US and UK Polaris systems, Britain's replacement deterrent, and the UK's participation within the nuclear arms race. Furthermore, he, 'travelled to Faslane in protest since 1988' with great frequency.<sup>21</sup> Because disarmament groups were struggling to maintain public interest, reinforcement from the Christian peace movement proved most beneficial, especially in regards to protest actions and public awareness.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> *GH*, 27 June 1983, p. 2; S. Clark, *Just War Theory: A study paper for the Scottish Episcopal Church* (Scottish Episcopal Church: 1983), p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *TC*, November 1985, p.7; *TC*, Summer 1988, p. 20.

<sup>21</sup> Correspondence with Shanks (09/18/02); *TC*, Summer 1983, p.7.

<sup>22</sup> Shanks was convinced that Trident 'is theologically and morally indefensible', and the Community was affiliated with Trident Ploughshares and the SCND. Interview with Norman Shanks (09/18/02). Shanks was a former employee of the Scottish Office for fifteen years, Shanks had long links with Iona and joined the Community due to its commitment to campaigning for nuclear disarmament. Zelter, A., *Trident on Trial*, p.138.

By 1992 a majority of the religious community worked with the disarmament movement and therefore increased the volume of protest at Faslane, though numerically it still represented a tiny percentage of Scotland's overall population. Before the arrival of HMS *Vanguard*, the Church of Scotland's Science, Research and Technology Project published a comprehensive discussion on Trident between academics, theologians and the church, with the discussion focused on topics such as Trident's relevance in the post-Cold War era.<sup>23</sup> The Moderator of the Church of Scotland also led worship at Faslane in 1992, with members of the Committee actively participating in demonstrations and meetings.<sup>24</sup> If not for the consistent participation of Christian activists, the disarmament movement faced complete irrelevance during this most challenging period.

The focus of the Christian peace movement intensified after the 1996 ICJ verdict, and again with the restoration of the Scottish Parliament, with each event cultivating a noticeable though subdued reaction. In 1995 the Church of Scotland called upon central government to take the Trident issue into the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) talks, and in 1997 it urged central government to 'abandon' the system. Neither of these requests were ever fulfilled but pressure was again asserted after 1996 when the Quakers, along with other denominations, emphasised the general illegality of nuclear weapons upheld by the ICJ's Advisory Opinion.<sup>25</sup> The promise of greater autonomy served as a further source of inspiration. Before the Scottish parliamentary elections in 1999, the Roman Catholic bishops of Scotland published their views on a series of issues facing the electorate, including their opinion that

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<sup>23</sup> S.R.T. Project, *Taking Out Moscow: Talking About Trident* (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1991).

<sup>24</sup> Correspondence with McDonald. (01/09/02).

there could be no justification for stockpiling nuclear weapons in Scotland.<sup>26</sup> This was not a position reserved to the Catholic Church, and for Labour in Scotland one of civil society's three major cornerstones made their message clear as a majority of denominations encouraged the party to strive for disarmament regardless of Westminster's authority on the issue. At the gateway to the new millennium, Christian support for disarmament could not be more apparent.

### **Scottish courts and law**

In 1706-7 the Articles of Union declared that 'the Court of Session, or College of Justice, do after the Union, and notwithstanding thereof, remain in all time coming within Scotland'.<sup>27</sup> Scots law was not absorbed into a unified legal system, as the Union had guaranteed its autonomy. However, if we attempt to construct a history of Scottish courts and their experience with anti-Trident activists, a dilemma is immediately presented. Conversations with the Ministry of Defence Police unit at Faslane, the Greenock Sheriff Court, Helensburgh District Court, the High Council in Edinburgh and the Procurator Fiscal's office in Dumbarton revealed that court records pertaining to the arrest of activists, fines imposed, or court costs for the period between 1979-1999 were only available on a case-by-case basis.<sup>28</sup> Data sets, or specialised statistics on this particular issue, had not yet been accumulated, and Joe Ury of the British and Irish Legal Information Institute was unsure as to 'why they

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<sup>25</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement. 'Quaker Peace and Social Witness', *Nuclear Disarmament: Peace and Disarmament Introductory, Briefing no.5*, August 2000, p. 1. Correspondence with McDonald (01/09/02).

<sup>26</sup> CMO Scottish Roman Catholic Church, *Pre-Election Statement* (28 April 1999).

<sup>27</sup> The Articles of Union.

<sup>28</sup> The Procurator Fiscal's office in Dumbarton is where all instances of arrest at Faslane were handled. The office did reveal that there were individual records of individual cases, but in this instance it was impossible for the author to scour over thousands of cases over a twenty-year period.

were not broken down'.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, to complete an accurate historical account of Scottish courts, the legal process and its interaction with the disarmament movement proved elusive. Law enforcement's experience with protest at Faslane proved only somewhat more enlightening.

As will be discussed in Chapter Five, protest actions and subsequent arrest had taken place at Faslane since the arrival of Polaris, with numerous tactics employed by activists to make their dissatisfaction known. When made aware of a particular disarmament action that was to take place at Faslane, it was standard procedure for Dumbarton Police Office to make a request for 'mutual aid' from Strathclyde Police Force L Division. The level of assistance that the Strathclyde force provided corresponded with estimations concerning turnout for a particular event. According to a Strathclyde constable, larger demonstrations usually required 200 or more officers, with this figure including traffic officers, custody officers who dealt with arrest, a support unit which served public order duties by detaining those activists who chose to be destructive and control room staff co-ordinators for supervision. For every ten officers there was to be one sergeant, along with a chief inspector, a superintendent and numerous other senior officers for a single event. These operations obviously came with considerable cost to the taxpayer. Because a greater number of off-duty officers were deployed so as not to restrict law enforcement from performing other civic responsibilities, a single police operation would cost 'minimum, £5,000 to £6,000, at 2004 estimates and that was a highly conservative

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<sup>29</sup> Correspondence with Joe Ury, Executive Director of the British and Irish Legal Information Institute (17/11/03).

figure' (Photograph 4.1, 4.2).<sup>30</sup> Activists would argue that such expense would be unnecessary if Trident was removed from the Clyde, and that this fee was trivial when compared to the annual costs of the system's maintenance. Regardless of one's opinion, upon arrest a detainee's personal details were retrieved, with this information forwarded to the Procurator Fiscal, where the activist's struggle was transferred from Faslane to the Scottish courts.

When collecting information on the experience of Scottish courts with anti-Trident protest, the most basic statistics are currently held by Faslane Peace Camp and Trident Ploughshares. Activists believed these records demonstrated the tenacity of these groups, though advocates of Trident might argue that this only verified unflattering stereotypes. In 1982 Faslane Peace Camp, the year in which it was established, was subject to thirty-five arrests but these figures were to skyrocket. By December 1983 the specialist section amassed 178 arrests, and by 1986 it is estimated that it had gathered another 200.<sup>31</sup> According to the camp's most basic records, the site, on average, accumulated anywhere from 100-200 arrests per year up until 1999. As should be assumed, some actions accrued more arrests than others. In August 1986 alone thirty-eight demonstrators were arrested for setting up a temporary site outside the Coulport facility with the Dumbarton Sheriff forced to visit the cells of three protesters who refused to appear before him.<sup>32</sup> Finally, according to Jane Tallents of Nukwatch UK and Trident Ploughshares, between August 1998 and November 2003 Ploughshares had 2,785 appearances in Scottish courts including pleading diets,

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<sup>30</sup> Interview with Strathclyde Constable (12/10/03).

<sup>31</sup> Faslane Peace Camp-list of action, Available: <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/cndscot/camp/arrests/htm>. (07/07/02)

<sup>32</sup> *GH*, 12 August 1986, p. 3.

**Photograph 4.1: Strathclyde Police**



**Photograph 4.2: Strathclyde Police**



Over the course of this research, the relationship between the police and protesters has been described as amicable and cordial by both sides.

intermediate hearings, and trials (including adjournments), with Scottish courts imposing fines on members totalling, collectively, £60,000 and £52,000 in 1998 and 1999.<sup>33</sup> Between the camp and Ploughshares alone, there is the distinct possibility that the total for arrests and court appearances reached well over 5,000 over a sixteen-year period, with fines totalling anywhere from £560,000 to £1 million over this period. This may also be a conservative estimate, but one is only left to imagine the economic impact of these actions to policing, courts and prisons.

Before 1996 the relationship between Scottish law and international law remained largely untested, and in the shadow of the ICJ Advisory Opinion, the decision inspired protesters to employ both systems of law in their defence. When considering the usage of these laws over Trident actions in Scottish courts the historian must be careful to avoid the quagmire one is liable to encounter when investigating this topic. Individually, international and Scots law are lengthy, vastly complex topics vulnerable to the opinion of the court. Therefore, a defendant faced various difficulties when questioning Trident's legality. Primary amongst them were questions pertaining to the development of armed forces, acts of state doctrine, whether the defence of a soldier's duty can tenably be extended to include most acts of armed conflict but not Trident, and whether self-defence was available to direct activists.<sup>34</sup> The historiographical record has shown that not one case considering the legality of Trident ever succeeded except for the October 1999 Greenock Sheriff

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<sup>33</sup> Correspondence with Tallents (23/11/03)

<sup>34</sup> State doctrine is action on behalf of the Crown not questioned in court. J. Komorowski, 'The end of the road for action against Trident? Scots law and the Trident Programme', in Brian P. Jamison (ed.) *Scotland and the Cold War* (Dunfermline: Cualann Press, 2003), p. 146.

Court trial involving the 'Trident three'.<sup>35</sup> Despite the improbability of acquittal, activists continued to utilise this legal strategy well past its usefulness.

### **Scottish universities**

Scottish universities date from before the Reformation (St Andrews 1413, Glasgow 1451) and since the time of the Scottish Enlightenment academic institutions have been heavily involved in technological development. This was especially so during the two World Wars, and it is without question that they contributed significantly to the British defence industry. However, details concerning their contributions to the Trident project are presently classified, and this has made the process of assembling a precise historical narration an impossible task. Regardless, it should be acknowledged that the Ministry of Defence recognised the strong science and technology capability of UK universities as 'a source of innovation and knowledge of relevant research'. More recently, it was for this reason that the Ministry encouraged universities to participate in the Defence Technology Centre Scheme (DSTL).<sup>36</sup>

In order to establish some sort of background on academic involvement with the system, comparisons can be made with the participation of American universities and their experience with research and development for the US Department of Defense.

In 1983 Gwyn Prins, a Cambridge historian, stated that:

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<sup>35</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement. It is probable that this would be the last time the disarmament movement would be permitted to employ the international law defence due to the 2001 Lord Advocate's Referral.

<sup>36</sup> The Ministry had placed almost all of its research work over the past five years with Defence Evaluation and Research Agency and, since July 2001, with DSTL and QinetiQ. In turn these organisations have sub-contracted with academia in a manner which ensures that the Department's needs are met in an integrated and cost effective manner. The Ministry does not hold centrally information about the numbers of sub-contracts placed by our contractors with either academia or

...as the economic climate for universities has grown more chill, the volume of Pentagon-funded research increased more significantly and has received a warm welcome from university administration. In the period 1978-1981, military research on American campuses has increased 70 per cent in dollar volume and has become the most reliable and fastest growing source of external funding for many distinguished institutions.<sup>37</sup>

Suffering under the weight of a fatigued economy throughout this period, Scottish universities could not afford to be averse to this type of arrangement. In 1989 the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS), founded in April 1969 as a pressure group of concerned scientific experts, revealed that the Ministry of Defence funded 853 separate research projects worth £55 million at several British universities and polytechnics.<sup>38</sup> More relevant to this topic, it noted that at least three Scottish universities were contracted to perform nuclear weapons research pertaining to the development of Polaris and Trident missile systems. Between 1980-1989, the BSSRS claimed that the University of Aberdeen was involved in a £69,000 investigation of materials used by both the Polaris and Trident systems. St. Andrews Department of Physics also earned £53,689 between 1985-1987 for a study concerning df plasma physics, and the University of Dundee was allocated £29,536 between 1987-1988 for the development of laser techniques that simulated extreme temperatures generated at the centre of an exploded device.<sup>39</sup> However, Scottish universities also supported numerous student activist groups and academics that called for disarmament, but as one university spokesman put it, 'we carry out pure research on a no-nonsense basis' and 'what the Ministry chooses to do with what we are asked to

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industry and this could be provided only at disproportionate cost. *Research Projects*, Parliamentary Debates (Hansard), Vol 401 Col 630, 18 March 2003.

<sup>37</sup> G. Prins, *Defended to Death: A study of the nuclear arms race* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1983), p.147.

<sup>38</sup> R. Evans, *Universities and the Bomb: the funding of research in universities during the 1980s by the Atomic Weapons Establishment at Aldermaston* (BSSRS, 1989), p. .5.

<sup>39</sup> df plasma physics was concerned with the split second phase after the detonation of a nuclear weapon. Evans, *Universities and the Bomb*, p. .5.

design is up to them'.<sup>40</sup> Though a more informative historical account will have to be completed at a later date, in this instance one of Scottish civil society's three major cornerstones remained indifferent to Trident.

### **Nuclear Free Local Authorities**

While the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities dates back to the sixteenth century, according to author George Monies, 'local government has a long history in Scotland but it was only in the nineteenth century that a structure was developed'.<sup>41</sup> This framework has been modified on several occasions to meet increasing requirements, with the first major rationalisation occurring in the 1890s, minor changes made after World War One and considerable restructuring in the 1920s. The Local Government Act (Scotland) 1929 was the first comprehensive legislation to reconfigure the responsibilities of local authorities, but Monies has explained that greater economic and social planning by central government administration created alterations in the 'range, nature and scale of local authority functions after 1945'.<sup>42</sup> Local authorities were finding it difficult to carry out their assigned responsibilities, with the need for reform again recognised in the 1960s. In 1965 the Labour Party initiated the Wheatley Commission, and their 1969 report supported radical reorganisation. Most of these recommendations were later enacted in the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 with further attempts made to fine tune the system.<sup>43</sup> More to the point, by this time local government was a vital element of Scottish civil society because it was responsible for issues such as strategic planning,

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<sup>40</sup> *GH*, 1 June 1989, p. 3.

<sup>41</sup> G. Monies, *Local Government in Scotland, Edition 3* (Edinburgh: Sweet and Maxwell, 1996), p. 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>43</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 146.

environmental services and industrial development. Because of central government's intentions with Trident, local authorities were not given the opportunity to perform these duties to their satisfaction. Dumbarton District Council provides a revealing case-study of the complications that could arise from this responsibility.

Strategic planning was about infrastructure, and this topic alone included research and intelligence, strategic economic planning, industrial and urban development and the countryside.<sup>44</sup> Dumbarton's attempts to meet these obligations were abruptly disregarded by the Ministry of Defence, with several examples revealing the shifting lines that accompanied the powers of local authorities.<sup>45</sup> Because Trident was initially at the centre of controversy in Scotland, this encouraged local authorities to band together to resist the government's intentions. This partnership was referred to as the Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA).

Its origins were based in 1970s Australia, where the NFLA united local authorities in their opposition to nuclear weapons, nuclear waste dumping and the transportation of nuclear materials. Of the estimated 150 local councils in Britain that eventually joined the NFLA, the first to become affiliated with this international union was Manchester City Council. It joined in November 1980, after the Thatcher government accepted the basing of the GLCM at Greenham Common. Declaring itself a Nuclear Free Zone (NFZ) Manchester called upon other local authorities to do the same, and by July 1982 the *Glasgow Herald* reported that half of Scotland's sixty-five regional and district councils expressed opposition to British possession of Trident.<sup>46</sup> With a National Steering Committee established to co-ordinate policy thereafter, anti-nuclear

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<sup>44</sup> Monies, *Local Government in Scotland*, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region.

sentiment became so prevalent amongst British local authorities throughout the early 1980s that at some point the Committee accumulated enough capital to provide legal services, policy advice, a member enquiry service and numerous group liaisons.<sup>47</sup>

According to Stewart Kemp, NFLA Steering Committee Secretary, at that time this concept proved highly popular with Scottish local authorities due in great part to the motorway transport of warheads between Coulport and Aldermaston as it was an issue that fostered a local safety issue which councils felt able to focus on.<sup>48</sup>

In exploring the history of Scottish NFLAs during this period problems confront us from the beginning. Except at its central office in Manchester the NFLA was not concerned with looking after its records, and after their immediate usefulness was past they were usually discarded – in this instance it was apparently a common procedure amongst local authorities. The interest of historians was not considered, and because the records of Scottish NFLAs scarcely exist, to construct an accurate historical account of their experiences proved most difficult. A conversation with Kemp revealed that ‘we haven’t kept the details...and the new councils are unlikely to have kept the details either’.<sup>49</sup> In a correspondence with Councillor Graham Marr of Midlothian Council, it was explained that, ‘there is no documentation in our possession which directly illustrates the local authorities’ approach to Trident.’<sup>50</sup> However, according to Kemp, Glasgow was the first Scottish council to join the NFLA, carrying a resolution in 1980.<sup>51</sup> Councillor Marr also explained that

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<sup>46</sup> *GH*, 1 July 1982, p.4

<sup>47</sup> NFLA Nuclear Free Local Authorities Report 2001, *Report for Resolution* (26 October 2001), p.3; *Nuclear Free Local Authorities web service*, Available: <http://nfznsa.gn.apc.org/index.html>. (09/01/02)

<sup>48</sup> Interview with Stewart Kemp, NFLA Steering Committee Secretary (26/09/02).

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> This predicament was also confirmed by Councillors at Fife, West Dumbartonshire, Glasgow City and Renfrewshire Council. Correspondence with Councillor Graham Marr, Member of Midlothian Council (28/10/02)

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Kemp (26/09/02).

Midlothian District Council and Lothian Regional Council affiliated 'soon after the Organisation was formed in the early 1980s.'<sup>52</sup> Finally, a correspondence with Douglas Kerr, member of the City of Edinburgh Council, has revealed that Edinburgh District Council became a member in the mid-1980s with the council establishing a Peace Advisory Committee that supported the Edinburgh Peace Festival. The Festival, in turn, organised events on Trident and other related issues.<sup>53</sup> Despite the apparent absence of historical materials, it becomes apparent that Trident, and operations involving the act of nuclear deterrence, were issues of significance during this period as the councils of Scotland's two largest population components quickly identified with this movement.

It was initially the issues of civil defence and Trident that established a closer liaison between Scottish NFLAs and the SCND. The validity of both official information and the system itself became the lynchpin of the conflict between central government and Scottish NFZs. While the employed tactic was to obstruct Trident's progress for as long as possible, analysis of the political characteristics of membership reveals that a majority of Scottish councils in support of the NFLA were those in Labour's control.<sup>54</sup> Kemp explained that:

...from memory I think old Stirling Council might have been Tory in the 1980s and therefore will not have joined the NFLAs. I only remember Stirling joining post local government reorganisation in March 1996 when I think Labour held a narrow majority...'<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Correspondence with Marr (28/10/02).

<sup>53</sup> Correspondence with Douglas Kerr, Member of the City of Edinburgh Council, (08/08/02).

<sup>54</sup> *GH*, 10 July 1985, p.8

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Kemp (26/09/02).

Kemp's estimations make one point clear. While poor civil defence emergency planning was a fundamental concern, the NFLA was utilised by Labour councillors, and the party overall, as leverage against central government and its intentions to deploy Trident. As noted in Chapter Three, Dumbarton's Labour majority also declared its territory a NFZ in May 1984.<sup>56</sup> District councils therefore represented a microcosm of the broader political picture and the Thatcher government was well aware of Labour's collective strategy in both Scotland and throughout the UK. In retaliation, local authorities were effectively silenced through the introduction of the 1986 Local Government Act. Marr explained that the Act, which precluded local authority activity critical of government policy, affected the campaigning stance that had been previously adopted, with the emphasis for local authorities transformed and energies channelled in the direction of the debate.<sup>57</sup> However, regardless of independent political motivations this should not discredit the intentions of the NFLA or its efforts to remove nuclear weapons from specific territories.

It is apparent that throughout the 1980s the nuclear weapons question strained the relationship between local authorities and central government, with councillors defending the interests of those constituents opposed to Trident but incapable of preventing its implementation. Political scientist Nirmala Rao described the nature of political representation as a relationship between two persons, the representative and the constituent, with the representative 'holding the authority to perform various actions that incorporate the agreement of the represented'.<sup>58</sup> Due to the electorate's intense response to the system, many local authorities from regions such as

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<sup>56</sup> See Chapter Three: The Scottish political dimension of Trident. *LH*, 25 May 1984, p. 5.

<sup>57</sup> Correspondence with Marr (28/10/02)

<sup>58</sup> N. Rao, *The Making and Unmaking of Local Self-Government* (Aldershot: Dartmouth Press, 1994), p.32.

Strathclyde felt obligated to challenge Trident and opted to confront the Thatcher government. Therefore, local agencies sometimes fell into conflict with central government departments, and one should not exaggerate the internal cohesion between both levels of government. Local government only enjoyed a very qualified and conditional autonomy, and councillors opposed to Trident could only do what they were explicitly permitted to do by Parliament. Furthermore, the United Kingdom was a unitary state rather than a federal state. In a unitary state, supreme power or sovereignty is not divided, as it is in a federal state, but concentrated in the hands of the central government.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, local government's ability to stonewall the system's progress collapsed because parliamentary law was supreme over other forms of law, and there were no constitutional restrictions on Parliament's law-making capacity.<sup>60</sup> It follows that the rights and very existence of local government was conditional rather than absolute. But if local authorities employed an extreme form of defiance, expulsion was always an alternative. The 1986 sequestration of Liverpool councillors opposed to the Thatcher government's rate-capping legislation served as an example of this.

From 1983 the Thatcher government intended to abolish the metropolitan county councils, especially the Greater London Council (GLC), and introduced new rate-capping legislation that squeezed local authority spending. Councils that behaved as if they 'were governments in exile' became a thorn in the side of central government, and so rather than run the risk confrontation, Thatcher decided to dissolve them.<sup>61</sup> The rate-capping policy also cut central government's economic support for local

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<sup>59</sup> R. Leach. and J. Percy-Smith, *Local Governance in Britain* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 212-213.

<sup>60</sup> Furthermore, no Parliament can bind its successors. *ibid.*,p. 212-213.

<sup>61</sup> Wainwright, *Labour: The tale of two parties*, p. 126.

authorities, with Liverpool City Council deeply affected after having no reserves to finance the maintenance of existing services or expansion that was desperately needed.<sup>62</sup> In 1984, these cuts resulted in Labour councils collectively adopting a policy of non-compliance with this legislation. In practice this defiance remained largely verbal. Yet by 1985 the Inner London Education Authority and the GLC led the retreat, with only Liverpool and Lambeth councils remaining true to the original policy of resistance. Neil Kinnock pushed forward with a policy of capitulation and urged Labour councils to try and soften the impact of Thatcher's policy.<sup>63</sup> Nevertheless, Militant Tendency, a Trotskyist faction within the Labour Party, had gained considerable influence within Liverpool's council and continued to resist Thatcher's plans through a mass movement of the unions and local residents. At that year's party conference, Kinnock launched a vitriolic attack on Liverpool City Council and by 1986 the chief administrative body of the Labour Party, the National Executive Committee, voted to expel those associated with the left wing grouping.<sup>64</sup> With the NFLA working in the midst of this tension, it was seeking recognition while placing great emphasis on the protection of civil society.

According to the Civil Defence Regulation of 1983, regional councils bore the primary responsibility for civil defence emergency planning, while district councils were responsible for assisting regional councils in carrying out their civil defence tasks.<sup>65</sup> Because local authorities were concerned with the inadequacy and ambiguity

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<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>63</sup> P. Carmichael, *Central-Local Government Relations in the 1980's: Glasgow and Liverpool Compared* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), p. 154.

<sup>64</sup> Derek Hatton was a member of the Labour Party and deputy leader of Liverpool City Council in the 1980s. He was expelled in 1986 for belonging to the Militant Tendency, an entryist faction in the Labour Party promoting Trotskyism. The National Executive Committee of the party voted to expel him by 12 votes to 6, the move being a policy aim of Neil Kinnock. Many believed Militant could have ruined Labour's chances of electoral success under Kinnock. *ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>65</sup> NFLA Nuclear Free Local Authorities, *Target Scotland* (October 1989).

of the guidance issued by central government for the preparation of plans with any war situation, including nuclear war, Scottish councils launched a civil defence study in September 1987. That year the NFLA feared that the future shortfall in plutonium for the proposed Trident system were reasons to suspect that plutonium from Dounreay might end up in French or British warheads.<sup>66</sup> Nevertheless, by October 1989 the *East Central Scotland Planning Assumption Study*, carried out by two scientists from the Department of Physics at Edinburgh University, and the *Strathclyde Region Planning Assumption Study*, undertaken by officers from the Emergency Planning Unit at Strathclyde Regional Headquarters, were brought together to create the document *Civil Defence Planning Assumptions in Central Scotland* (Photograph 4.3). Though less publicised than Strathclyde's 1983 Coulport Inquiry, due to the lack of public interest in Trident at that time, the report provided insight into matters such as government planning assumptions on conventional war and civilian protection but it also criticised conflicting plans for conventional and nuclear attack. Furthermore, it also discussed topics such as methods of protection from the short-term effects of nuclear attack, self-evacuation and unpleasant matters such as disposal of the dead.<sup>67</sup> While attempts to quantify the impact of nuclear war were only possible for certain areas, the study was believed to be as accurate as was possible and in some respects was more informative than the document released by Strathclyde Regional Council some six years earlier.<sup>68</sup>

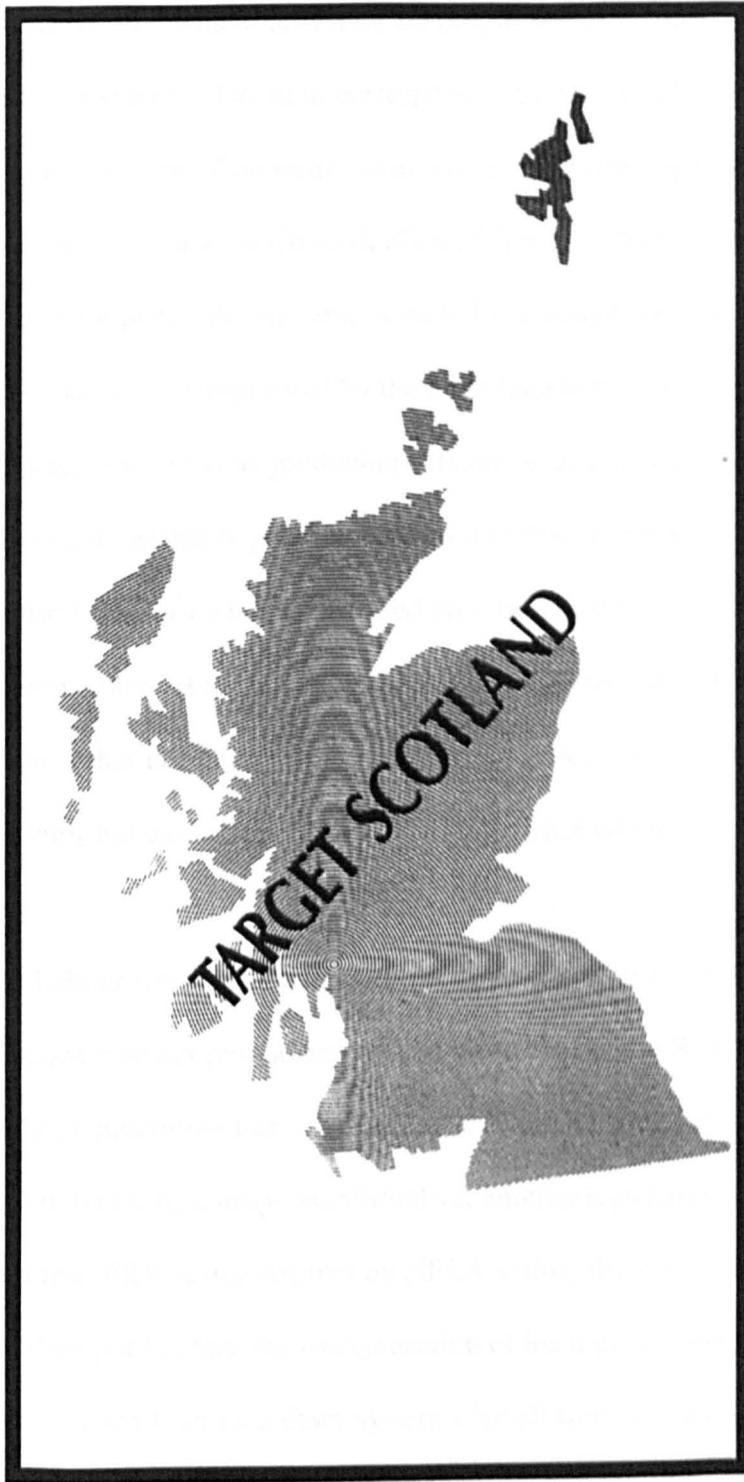
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<sup>66</sup> GCUA Nuclear Free Zones Scotland, *Dounreay Expansion: The Case Against* (July 1987).

<sup>67</sup> NFLA Nuclear Free Local Authorities, *Civil Defence Planning Assumptions in Central Scotland* (NFLA: October 1989).

<sup>68</sup> See Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region.

**Photograph 4.3: NFLA Pamphlet**



Concise and to the point, this simple pamphlet, which accompanied the publication *Civil Defence Planning Assumptions in Central Scotland*, made clear Scotland's vulnerability to a nuclear conflict.

By 1989 the Labour Party abandoned disarmament altogether and while the NFLA prepared for the arrival of Trident only a minor proportion of Scottish civil society actively opposed the system. Timed to correspond with the arrival of the first SSBN, in 1992 the National Steering Committee conference, sponsored by Glasgow City Council and Strathclyde Regional Council, allowed Kemp to declare that 'Trident was a legitimate matter for public debate' and as such, local authorities had a clear role to fulfil.<sup>69</sup> This task had been complicated by the 1986 legislation, yet the National Steering Committee responded by producing detailed legal guidance that instructed how authorities could justifiably publish material on relevant nuclear issues.<sup>70</sup> However, because *Vanguard's* arrival inspired only limited protest in Strathclyde, with interest plummeting yet further upon the arrival of *Victorious* and *Vigilant*, Douglas Kerr noted that Edinburgh District Council's Peace Forum ran until the middle to late 1990s but was stopped due to 'lack of participation'.<sup>71</sup>

Combined with Labour's transformation in policy and overwhelming public disinterest, local government reorganisation and the arrival of the Blair government in 1997 served only to undermine further the potency of the NFLA. Earlier on, the Major government had fortuitously established yet another legislative barrier for the NFLA. Though this bill was not inspired by NFLA action, the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1994 put in place the reorganisation of local government in Scotland from a two-tier framework into a unitary system with all former councils abolished along with the policy positions they employed.<sup>72</sup> These factors ultimately left the

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<sup>69</sup> GCUA Stewart Kemp, *The Cost of Trident: Local Authority Implications on Policy Proposals*, NSC Briefing Paper (Glasgow: June 1992), p.3.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement. Interview with Kerr (08/08/02).

<sup>72</sup> The drive to institutional reorganisation formed part of the restructuring of local government which was initiated under the Central Government through the increased scope of compulsory tendering of

NFLA incapacitated. Kemp explained that, 'since Labour came to power criticism of nuclear weapons and Trident has become more muted from Labour politicians at a local level'.<sup>73</sup> With the silent majority largely unconcerned and Labour councillors following party guidelines, the NFLA lost a majority of its support after 1996 with only fifteen Scottish councils remaining thereafter.<sup>74</sup>

## The Scottish media

According to journalist Ian Bell, most of Scotland's major newspapers have long histories, with the *Glasgow Herald* founded in 1783, the *Courier and Advertiser* in 1801 and the *Scotsman* established in 1817. More importantly, Bell has noted that the media of communications are 'politically or culturally' unstable, though their representations 'are crucial to the formation and preservation of national identity'.<sup>75</sup> When considering the Scottish media's depiction of Trident, Bell's assertion becomes increasingly unquestionable. The *Scotsman* lurched to the right in the 1990s when it was taken over by the Barclay Brothers, and the *Glasgow Herald* became more left-of-centre during the 1980s.<sup>76</sup> Yet when attempting to gauge the influence that media has held over Scots' views on the SSBN, it is first necessary to appreciate the not so subtle differences between local and national media.

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local authority services, tighter financial stringency and changes to key functions such as community care and education. Black, 1996/97 Audits of Local Authorities.

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Kemp (26/09/02).

<sup>74</sup> These councils included Aberdeen City, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Clackmannashire, Dundee City, East Lothian, Fife, Midlothian, North Ayrshire, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, Shetland Islands, Stirling, West Dumbartonshire and West Lothian Council. Interview with Kemp (26/09/02).

<sup>75</sup> I. Bell, 'Publishing, Journalism and Broadcasting' in Paul H. Scott (ed.) *Scotland: A Concise Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1993), p. 385.

<sup>76</sup> Information provided by Dr. Irene Maver (2/7/04).

A correspondence with Brian Taylor has revealed that local papers 'are entirely driven by local perceptions'.<sup>77</sup> When considering Trident, their motivation was inspired by whether they believed their readers were generally motivated by either employment or concerns with the system. If there was uncertainty, in many instances these publications attempted to reflect both. Providing an example, Taylor explained that a local paper in Peterhead would defend the fishing industry 'to the hilt' while a local paper in Caithness would tend to support employment at the Dounreay test establishment because that was the predominant issue. Yet that same publication would also acknowledge the environmental question of Dounreay.<sup>78</sup> When considering the local media's position on Trident, the *Helensburgh Advertiser*, the *Lennox Herald* and the *Dunfermline Press* made clear Taylor's assertion.

Arguably, strategic headlines had been utilised to relay the particular message a paper chose to deliver, regardless of agenda. In the period between 1979-1999 local newspapers for those communities heavily reliant on the employment Trident was thought to provide clearly demonstrated a push to the right. In the west of Scotland, the *Helensburgh Advertiser* proposed sustained employment, necessity and safety through titles which read 'Future of the Bases is Secure' in July 1980, 'Our defence is at stake' in September 1981, and 'Technical safety award for Faslane' in May 1996.<sup>79</sup> Much the same in the east of Scotland, before relocation the *Dunfermline Press* headlines frequently declared 'Base fit for the task in March 1984', 'Trident task for Rosyth' in July 1984 and 'Yard expansion talks: Council seek fair deal on Trident plan' in January 1986.<sup>80</sup> Local papers serving communities less accessible to Trident,

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<sup>77</sup> Correspondence with Taylor (12/02/03).

<sup>78</sup> Correspondence with Taylor, (12/02/03).

<sup>79</sup> *HA*, 18 July 1980, p. 1; *HA*, 18 September 1981, p. 2; *HA*, 30 May 1996, p. 9.

<sup>80</sup> *DP*, 25 March 1983, p. 1; *DP*, 12 July 1984, p. 1; *DP*, 7 January 1986, p. 7.

especially in terms of economic advantage, tended to lean to the left and often brandished criticism. The *Lennox Herald*, also in the west of Scotland, was a prime example of this. Headlines such as 'Trident missiles a necessary evil?' in August 1980, 'Fury over Trident II Purchase' in March 1982 and 'Ministry faces flak' in February 1985 all presumed Dumbarton's dissatisfaction with the decision to replace Polaris with Trident.<sup>81</sup> However, there is the danger of historical inaccuracy if it is not recognised that local papers incorporated the arguments of both sides within individual stories and published articles, though with noticeably less frequency. In February 1981 the *Dunfermline Press* offered 'CND unfurl their banner' while the *Helensburgh Advertiser* explained that 'Defence Secretary urged to go public on problems at Faslane' in May 1989.<sup>82</sup> It was sporadic, obligatory entries such as these that only rarely acknowledged the Trident controversy in Dunfermline or Helensburgh. Taylor explained that the agendas of publishers can be highly influential over reporting, and apparently this assumption proves correct, but what of the national media?

National broadcast and print media favours either committed or partisan journalism, with patrons of this style arguing that it makes clear where the author stands; or it tends toward neutral or detached journalism, with proponents arguing that it provides a more accurate and unbiased service to the public.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, this form of media is more generalised as it tends to focus more on issues of national, rather than local, importance. Though the Glasgow University Media Group has asserted that television often disregards protest and focuses more on personalities, Taylor explained that, 'in Britain I know of no broadcasting networks which have agendas

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<sup>81</sup> *LH*, 15 August 1980, p. 4.; *LH*, 12 March 1982, p.1; *HA*, 15 February 1985, p. 2.

<sup>82</sup> *DP*, 27 February 1981, p. 15; *HA*, 20 May 1989, p. 5.

beyond the search for an audience and their wish to serve that audience'.<sup>84</sup> A verdict on this has yet to be established, but it is irrefutable that viewers have at least some influence over a network's particular message.

While researching the print media that served Scotland's major population centres, a particularly interesting factor has been discovered. According to Bell, in 1940 there were nineteen titles in Scotland, eight of which were English-owned. By 1980, the year of Trident's procurement, there were only fifteen papers with four in Scottish hands, two were English-owned and no fewer than nine were the property of multinationals'.<sup>85</sup> Given that modern communications tend invariably to globalisation, Bell argued that:

The problem of the Scottish media is easily put down; how do you represent, report or foster a national identity - even if you are sure what it is - when everywhere communications are falling into the hands of multinationals who, by definition, have no country?...Assimilation has long been a problem for the Scottish media confronted with the demands of a larger neighbour...To that extent, the Scottishness of the Scottish press is merely superficial, if by Scottishness it is meant a willingness to reflect the views of the majority.<sup>86</sup>

More recently the *Herald* came back into Scottish ownership, but for some time the *Scotsman* was owned by a subsidiary of the International Thomson Organisation, Thomson Regional Newspapers. These papers, again according to Bell, 'have for decades, perhaps for centuries, acted as a distorting mirror'.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, if we focus our attention on these two newspapers and disregard the *Daily Record*, which continued to serve the Labour Party, devolution and the largest block of voters 'with

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<sup>83</sup> See Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement. Correspondence with Taylor (12/02/03).

<sup>84</sup> Correspondence with Taylor (12/02/03).

<sup>85</sup> Bell, *Publishing, Journalism and Broadcasting*, p. 387.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid*, p. 388.

unwavering journalistic selectivity', it becomes an effort to deny Bell's relentless criticisms.<sup>88</sup>

A swift overview of these two papers bears the unmistakable mark of ambiguity, which ultimately solidifies Bell's theory. In March 1982 a Glasgow headline declared 'Trident system is off target', insinuating futility, yet by May 1986 the *Herald* apparently rejoiced when it announced a '£220 m project for Trident fleet refits'.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, that same paper expressed frustration when it stated 'Clyde jobs blow as work is given to the US' in September 1982, but adopted a more defiant stance in October 1992 when it claimed 'Anti-Trident protesters brushed aside at Faslane'.<sup>90</sup> The same degree of confusion applies to the newspaper that regarded itself as Scotland's national paper. In May 1995 the *Scotsman's* headline announced 'Hopes raised for Trident work at Rosyth', suggesting support for the Polaris replacement, while it chastised the 'Deadly war machine [that] sweeps aside Faslane peace protesters' in March 1996.<sup>91</sup> A consistent perspective on Trident is never established at any point, and while these papers simultaneously commend and condemn the system throughout the 1980s, this journalistic imbalance is again employed throughout the 1990s. Bell acknowledged that neither paper had been found guilty of disloyalty at any point in their histories, yet 'both have lived the contradiction: Scotland's national newspapers refused to seriously question the political settlement fundamental to the United Kingdom'.<sup>92</sup> This same indictment could be applied to their handling of the Trident issue.

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, p. 388.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, p.388.

<sup>89</sup> *GH*, 12 March 1982, p. 1; *GH*, 2 May 1986, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> *GH*, 10 September 1982, p. 4; *GH*, 26 October 1992, p. 2

<sup>91</sup> *TS*, 18 May 1995, p. 1; *TS*, 20 March 1996, p. 1; *TS*, 27 September 1997, p. 1

<sup>92</sup> Bell, *Publishing, Journalism and Broadcasting*, p. 399.

Various media techniques had also been applied to the subject of Trident in Scotland. Symbolism is contained within traditional myths, with weapon systems purposely given classical names to set them in the structure of traditional culture. 'Trident' is not only the god Poseidon's weapon, but also Britannia's, and this symbolism may not be without impact on some British minds.<sup>93</sup> Comparisons with accepted primitive weapons was a way in which nuclear weapons were classified as part of human culture, and thus, these weapons were subconsciously regarded as less dangerous than they actually were. This was a strategy employed by the defence industry, but a strategic vocabulary, or symbolism, had also been consistently applied to media presentations. According to linguist Paul Chilton, one British newspaper believed the neutron bomb 'will give Europe a *shield*'. Simply stated, Chilton's argument was, 'who would object to a purely defensive shield?'<sup>94</sup> In terms of word association, the Scottish media has more often than not associated the system with terms of defence (protection), employment (financial security) and safety (invulnerability), while activists had been typically linked to radicalism (social irresponsibility), unemployment (personal irresponsibility) and defectiveness (the term, 'the great unwashed', springs to mind). Depending on one's opinion of Trident, either side of this argument could be rationally construed as a misconception.

### **The Scottish Trades Union Congress**

The founding congress of the STUC occurred in 1897 with W.W. Knox, Scottish historian, making it clear that it was primarily established due to the feeling amongst Scottish delegates that 'not enough attention was being paid to matters concerning

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<sup>93</sup> P. Chilton, 'Nukespeak: nuclear language, culture and propaganda' in Crispin Aubrey (ed) *Nukespeak: the media and the bomb* (London: Comedia Publishing Group, 1982), p. 105

Scotland in the British Trades Union Congress'.<sup>95</sup> Commonly linked with the 1919 Forty Hours strike and attempts to 'paint Clydeside revolutionary red' after the First World War, for some the STUC did nothing to discourage its association with communism. This becomes readily apparent as George Middleton, STUC General Secretary until 1963, believed that what 'people wanted...was an alliance with the Soviet Union'.<sup>96</sup> It therefore came as little surprise that the STUC rejected the usefulness of the SSBN and played an important role in the anti-Polaris movement, often joining forces with folk singers, the SCND and party protesters in their opposition. In November 1960 the STUC's liaison committee attempted to persuade the Scottish Council of the Labour Party to form a joint coalition against US intentions for the Holy Loch, but the Labour leadership declined this offer until party authorities in London were able to manage a clear policy steer. Despite this setback the STUC co-organised one of the first major anti-Polaris demonstrations in Glasgow the following month, and at the 1961 congress in Rothesay it also approved a 'stringently-worded' general council repudiating the purpose of the American presence.<sup>97</sup>

According to author and journalist Keith Aitken, rather than focusing its initial objections on nuclear weapons or Scotland's vulnerability as a target for Soviet military planners, the STUC's principal objection was to the aggressive stance that the Americans' forward operating base represented. Straightforward disarmament therefore became official in 1963 when Michael McGahey, miners' activist and

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<sup>94</sup> Chilton, *Nukespeak*, p. 105.

<sup>95</sup> W.W. Knox, *Industrial Nation: Work, Culture and Society in Scotland, 1800-present* (Edinburgh: EUP, 1999), p. 158.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220; K. Aitken, *The Bairns of Adam: the story of the STUC* (Edinburgh: Polygon Press, 1997), p. 148.

<sup>97</sup> Aitken, *The Bairns of Adam*, pp. 120, 202.

unequivocal communist, rejected a British nuclear capability and its construction of the Resolution class.<sup>98</sup> Though a general council motion at the 1964 STUC conference at Perth demanded the removal of all nuclear weapons from Scotland, American and British systems remained in place.

After analysis of the Scottish political dimension of Trident it has been revealed that the government advertised the system as a source of employment in the midst of economic crisis. However, the STUC also rejected the deterrent on economic grounds but it initially failed adequately to emphasise this most significant point. The disarmament movement would adopt this outlook in time, but, like his predecessors, Aberdeen's Jimmy Milne, member of the CPGB and STUC General Secretary from 1976-1986, generally focused on strategic imperatives and opposed the sea-borne deterrent on the basis of threat. So much so that in 1981 the STUC, under his leadership, condemned the course being pursued by a government which 'fails to recognise the futility' of nuclear weapons because Scots had 'no intention of being sacrificed'.<sup>99</sup> Maintaining a strategy that required drastic adaptation, it was for this reason that the STUC rejected Thatcher's reasoning at that time.

Campbell Christie, General Secretary from 1986-1998, also supported this view.

Born in 1937 and raised in Glasgow, by the early 1960s Christie, then secretary of the National Assistance Board section in the Civil Service Clerical Association, helped to transform the Society for Civil and Public Servants.<sup>100</sup> Following in the footsteps of

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> GCUA Nuclear Disarmament Sub-Committee, *Peace and Détente*, Trade Councils Annual Report: STUC Council Minutes, (Rothesay 1981), p. 254.

<sup>100</sup> Aitken, *The Bairns of Adam*, p. 253.

McGahey and Milne, Christie made his position on Trident clear during a speech for the Campaign for a Nuclear Free Scotland when he stated:

We live in one world and whatever social system we live in, whatever stage of economic development our country has reached, we are increasingly interdependent. Since the trade union movement represents the best ideals of internationalism, the trade union movement can and should play a leading role in the struggle for a new international economic order and for peace and disarmament.<sup>101</sup>

With the Scottish economy in a state of paralysis throughout the 1980s the STUC understood that monies invested in Trident held serious implications for housing, job creation and social services. Yet a well-devised economic strategy that undermined Trident's utility was not fully implemented up until the early 1990s. Because Scots had learned to live with Polaris and were under the threat of nuclear war since 1945, a new plan was in order. It was an economic strategy that was later accentuated by Christie's successor, Dr. Bill Speirs.

Speirs initially joined the STUC as an Assistant Secretary in 1979, and towards the end of the Cold War he went on to emphasise the economic burden of a system that was, according to the STUC and numerous others, destined to have no true value in the post-Cold War era.<sup>102</sup> During a NFZ conference speech in Glasgow in June 1992, Speirs emphasised that reallocated funds acquired from the decommissioning of the system could have funded the:

...whole Scottish Health Service for almost five years, or – more helpfully, fund District General Hospitals at a cost of £32.5 million; a CAT scanner at £500,000; optical lasers at £50,000; kidney dialysis

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<sup>101</sup> GCUA *Speech by Campbell Christie, General Secretary of the STUC, Campaign for a nuclear free Scotland, 29 October 1989.*

<sup>102</sup> GCUA *Background on Bill Speirs, General Secretary, Scottish Trades Union Congress.*

machines at \$13,000; a staff nurse at £14,648 per annum; a ward sister at £19,334 per annum; a domestic worker at £7,648 per annum; or a physiotherapist at £15,970 per annum.<sup>103</sup>

Corresponding with the arrival of the first boat roughly 239,000 Scots were claiming unemployment-related benefits as the Trident Works Programme approached completion.<sup>104</sup> According to STUC calculations, Trident's cancellation could have saved an estimated £17 billion at 1991/92 prices over its projected lifetime, and thus offered serious benefits for issues such as railways, budgets for Scottish local authorities, housing and employment. Speirs provided numerous examples of alternative funding, and he also estimated that £1.6 billion, or 9.5 per cent of Trident cancellation-based savings, could have enabled the number of local authority nursery places in the Strathclyde Region to be trebled for two decades if decommissioning occurred that summer.<sup>105</sup> Regardless, with Trident's completion on the foreseeable horizon such observations failed to invigorate an interest with decommissioning.

The STUC's arguments against Trident largely fell upon deaf ears as the disarmament movement in Scotland experienced a downward spiral in public support. The silent majority focused its attentions elsewhere. Furthermore, the STUC, like the disarmament movement, generally failed to incorporate the tragic experience of Rosyth into their campaigns after June 1993, which potentially underlined their current economic strategy. At a 1994 Glasgow conference designed to revive the Scottish Labour Movement's campaigning against the deterrent, Assistant Secretary Richard Leonard was careful in his acknowledgement of Trident expenditure and its ability to generate employment and capital investment within a number of local

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<sup>103</sup> GCUA Statement by Bill Speirs, STUC Deputy General Secretary to Nuclear Free Zones Conference, 10 June 1992.

<sup>104</sup> *Scottish Economic Statistics 2000*, Available: [www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/ses2000/secs-47.asp#8](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/ses2000/secs-47.asp#8).

economies in Scotland. These investments included the production of submarine periscopes in Glasgow, hulls in Renfrew, steel plates from Ravenscraig in Motherwell, navigation systems in Edinburgh and the production of tritium for warheads at Chapelcross. He further cited capital expenditure of £120 million that was made for RD57 at Rosyth Royal Dockyard, and the £1,700 million on the development of infrastructure at Coulport, but little was made of the relocation of Trident refits to Devonport.<sup>106</sup> Leonard's reasons for this dismissal remain unclear. However, perhaps taking from AESG statistics Leonard clearly accentuated the temporary nature of work generated through Trident, and argued that the STUC's *Emergency Jobs Package* could have created over 55,000 direct and 19,000 indirect jobs, offsetting the loss of civilian jobs at Faslane, for an investment of £1,350 million.<sup>107</sup> This was a figure paltry in comparison to that spent on Trident over its operational cycle, but similar to the SNP's studies on employment alternatives, these projections failed to inspire a noticeable reaction.

By the mid-1990s the STUC's efforts were further undermined by the inevitability of Trident and unavoidable political circumstances. After losing three consecutive general elections Labour had rejected disarmament altogether, and after millions of trade unionists deserted the party and voted Conservative in the 1983 general election, it was evident that its policy reversal on Trident was to be handled with caution.<sup>108</sup> With the core argument of Britain's trade unions centred on alternative employment and the system's expense to the taxpayer, Labour took the view that with boats under

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<sup>105</sup> *Statement by Bill Speirs, Nuclear Free Zones Conference.*

<sup>106</sup> GCUA Speech by Richard Leonard, *The Economic Consequences of Trident* (March 1994), p. 2; *GH*, 3 December 1985, p.1.

<sup>107</sup> Leonard, *The Economic Consequences*, pp. 3-8. See Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region.

<sup>108</sup> Knox, *Industrial Nation*, p. 2.

construction and the Tridents Work Programme virtually complete, it was time to face the fact that Trident was coming whether unions liked it or not. After three attempts, reality set in.

During the October 1993 Labour conference in Brighton, party leader John Smith failed to convince trade unionists to reconsider, and during the October 1994 conference Kinnock stressed to Blair the need to 'keep the trust' of the electorate through Labour's dedication to national security. After Smith's unexpected death Blair served as Smith's replacement, but he also left the 1994 event empty-handed. That year the STUC greeted the future Prime Minister with *Trident in Scotland: Not Safe, Not Economic, Not Wanted*, a booklet which included contributions from General Secretary Christie, Scottish Labour CND's Tony Southall and the SCND's John Ainslie (**Photograph 4.4**). Bringing together trade unionists, politicians and protesters, the document questioned Trident's applicability in the post-Cold War era, it argued that both unions and Labour in Scotland rejected the system and it considered various radiological hazards.<sup>109</sup> However, by 1995 Trident was set to assume responsibility as the national deterrent, and, according to Frank Purdie, Labour reminded trade unionists that within one year HMS *Vigilant* would make its first appearance at Faslane.<sup>110</sup> Because the future of the replacement system was guaranteed, a narrow majority of unions understood the futility of their objections at that year's conference and voted in favour of Trident.<sup>111</sup> Blair also convinced unions that opposition to Trident served only to damage Labour's credibility, and to do so

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<sup>109</sup> *Trident in Scotland: Not Safe, Not Economic, Not Wanted*, p.1; STUC STUC, General Council Report, *R.13 Conference - 'Scotland Without Trident'*, 1994, p.172-173.

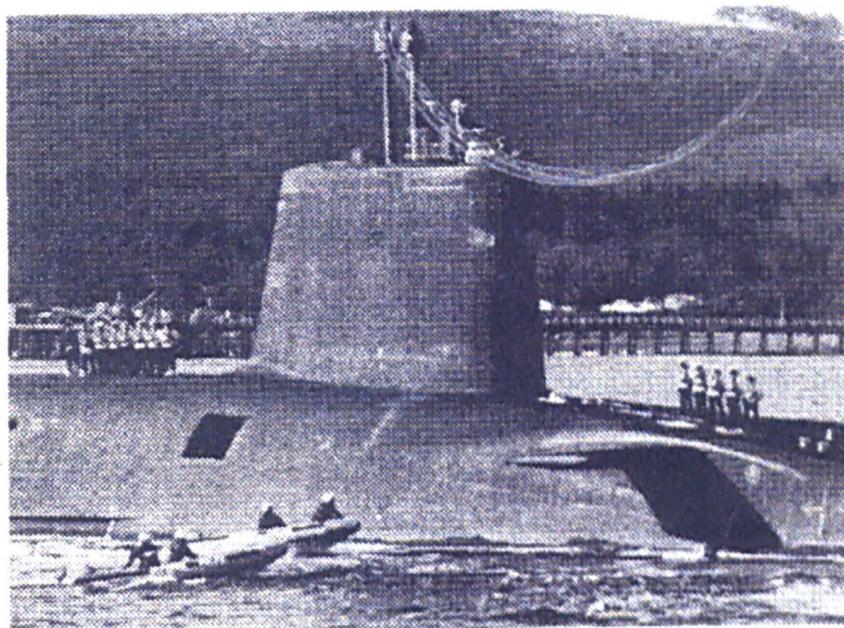
<sup>110</sup> *Vigilant* was the second Trident SSBN to arrive at Faslane. Interview with Purdie (02/06/03).

<sup>111</sup> 55.8 per cent of unions voted to retain Trident. *TG*, 6 October 1994, p. 1; *TT*, 5 October 1995, p. 1.

Photograph 4.4: STUC booklet

**TRIDENT**

*in* **SCOTLAND**



*not* **SAFE  
ECONOMIC  
WANTED**

potentially granted the Major government yet another term in power. Nevertheless, the STUC refused to abandon its conscientious stance.<sup>112</sup>

A correspondence with Dr. Bill Speirs revealed that Blair's lobbying of individual unions did not affect the STUC, there was no infighting and that policy remained straightforward in its opposition to Trident. Speirs went as far as emphasising that during the 1994-1999 period, the STUC's affiliated unions gave support to the SCND, to 'anti-Trident activity' and that it 'continued to issue press releases' with the *Scottish Trade Union Review* frequently publishing pro-disarmament articles.<sup>113</sup> Of greater significance, he also explained that 'it would probably be fair to say that during 1994-1999, STUC focus was more on the securing of a Scottish Parliament than on campaigning against Trident, but that did not affect the policy position'.<sup>114</sup> This statement verifies points embedded throughout the contents of this thesis. As has already been noted in Chapter Three, this assertion demonstrated both Trident's absence as a part of the push for greater autonomy, and its status as an issue of dwindling importance. Similar to Labour's view in Scotland, it was apparent that Trident had also become a symbolic issue for the STUC.

In 1996 the STUC reiterated that the operating costs of Trident could be more usefully deployed in rejuvenating the Scottish economy. Furthermore, by December 1999 Speirs, now General Secretary, released a holiday message which stated that 'our gift

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<sup>112</sup> The STUC observed the fiftieth anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and recognised that Trident had come into full operation BS I. Goudie, 'Diversifying for Defence', *Scottish Trade Union Review* (November-December 1995: Number 73), p.12. BS B. Quail, 'Hiroshima...Nagasaki...Never Again!', *Scottish Trade Union Review* (May-June 1995, Number 70), p. 6. The STUC also called for the immediate scrapping of the programme and for the £22 billion in running and decommissioning costs to be redirected to the generation of 'good quality, long-term' employment opportunities aimed at meeting social needs. STUC STUC, *Composite C: The Peace Dividend (Covering Motions Nos. 20 and amendment, and 21)*, 1995.

<sup>113</sup> Correspondence with Bill Speirs, General Secretary of the STUC (15/09/02).

to the children of the new Millennium' should be 'the removal of Trident'.<sup>115</sup>

However, despite honourable intentions, this sentiment served as nothing more than an open appeal.

## Public Opinion

Understanding the public's experience with the Trident represents a formidable challenge, and because civil society's perspective on the nuclear deterrent, and its experiences during the Cold War, are still unfamiliar subjects to the Scottish historian there remains a need for analysis in both quantitative and qualitative terms. This has already been noted in the Introduction of this study, yet a quote from the Scottish historian, Michael Lynch, may be of assistance. Lynch stated that:

The major events of themes in Scottish history – such as the coming to power of Kenneth mac Alpin in 843, the Wars for Independence which afflicted Scotland for almost a hundred years from 1296 onwards, the Reformation of 1556-60, the Union of 1707 and the Enlightenment of the mid-eighteenth century – are easy to list, even if historians lists' would vary a little. The impact of such landmarks on Scotland's cultural identity is less easy to evaluate. Each of those listed above, it is possible to argue and it was argued at or near the time, was a turning point, at which the concern of contemporaries was less the past than the present<sup>116</sup>

Scotland's role in the nuclear defence of the United Kingdom has yet to earn a place amongst these monumental events, but lack of association should not be permitted to undermine its importance to Scottish history. Nevertheless, because the British

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<sup>114</sup> Correspondence with Speirs (15/09/02).

<sup>115</sup> STUC STUC General Council Report, *Resolution No. 118 – Trident*, (1996); STUC Bill Speirs. *STUC General Secretary's Message for the New Year and New Millennium - 'A dynamic Scottish Parliament, equality and social justice throughout the world, and an end to nuclear weapons, starting with Trident'*, (28 December 1999).

<sup>116</sup> M. Lynch, 'Scottish Culture in its Historical Perspective' in Paul H. Scott (ed.) *Scotland: A Concise Cultural History* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1993), p. 15.

deterrent inspired intense reaction in Scotland during two separate periods, it requires little effort to differentiate between those who supported procurement, and those who did not.<sup>117</sup>

Through various media outlets, the responses of those concerned with Trident were made unequivocal. However, when attempting to establish an historical perspective on this subject a conundrum is fostered through the inaction of the silent majority. While views on the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq were amplified through nationwide protests in 2003, the same could not be said for Trident. These views were also susceptible to modification as concerns with the Cold War and the post-Cold War Trident were two very different issues altogether. Therefore, it is insufficient to theorise that a majority of Scots generally rejected these weapons simply because the media or the disarmament movement exhibited concerns when Polaris submarines suffered cracks in their secondary cooling systems or when ballistic missiles were dropped during transport at the Holy Loch.<sup>118</sup> It is equally inaccurate to suggest that a majority of Scots generally supported procurement of these systems just because livelihoods were derived from Trident's shore facilities, especially when a significant number of employees preferred another line of work. There is little doubt that a majority of citizens held an opinion on Polaris or Trident, but an official forum was not made available and most chose not to advertise their beliefs for one reason or another. For these reasons alone it is reasonable to suggest that Trident was received in Scotland with a fluctuating degree of ambivalence, though a verifiable

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<sup>117</sup> Scottish response to the British government's procurement of Polaris, on the surface, appears to be contained. The introduction of Polaris to the Holy Loch may have taken much of the wind from this argument.

<sup>118</sup> W.M. Arkin and J. Handler, *Neptune Papers No. 3: Naval Accidents 1945-1988* (London: Greenpeace Institute for Policy Studies, 1989), p.58-61

determination on this particular subject might only be completed sometime after the system is decommissioned.

Hesitance with Trident nurtured divisions within Scottish civil society but it did not inspire so powerful a split that it encouraged most Scots to re-evaluate their country's status as a quasi-autonomous state. James Mitchell can bare quotation at length:

Cultural nationalists stressed the distinctive cultural characteristics of Scotland and placed less emphasis on economic arguments. Political or economic nationalists must, by defining themselves as nationalists at all, have a conception of Scotland as a distinct entity but stress the socio-economic advantages of self-government. This applies equally to those who campaign for any limited measure of home rule...Efforts to stimulate a sense of Scottish identity were only one part of the battle: another was to convince Scots that this identity had a positive and political meaning.<sup>119</sup>

When considering Trident's repercussions on both cultural or political identity towards the end of the Cold War (1979-1989), the system was naturally understood as a deterrent to foreign aggression. Notwithstanding this, the efforts of Scottish separatists to remove Trident from Scotland were ultimately hampered by simple lack of interest, security concerns and a struggling economy that needed jobs enough to accept the system's necessity. The fact that procurement placed further financial strains upon the national economy was not highlighted. Furthermore, it is certainly possible that, at that time, a majority in Scotland recognised that reorganisation of the UK's military framework only served to compromise national security. So why did the post-Cold War era not prove to be more advantageous for separatists when considering Trident's impact on these identities? The answer lies with three, possibly four, justifications. From 1989-1999 Trident still employed thousands of civilians in

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<sup>119</sup> Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government*, pp. 24-25.

Strathclyde, and many believed there was little point in discarding a source of employment after the threat of nuclear exchange had begun to subside and interest in these weapons, in both societal and political terms, plunged. Amongst a number of problematic issues, the SNP had also not devised proposals for a military capability that was at least as credible as that which was already available. The economic implications of a Scottish Defence Force were, and still are, somewhat daunting.<sup>120</sup> In this instance Trident presented few complications for those seeking only a limited measure of home rule, as defence was a matter reserved to Westminster. However, the SNP's arguments for self-government unravelled under the weight of economic and military considerations alone, and for a majority of Scots, independence did not constitute a sound personal or political purpose. Examples of how Trident influenced Scottish civil society remain.

Though Trident no longer resonated with the Scottish electorate in the post-Cold War era, it remained a lingering though diminutive issue. Chalmers and Walker have stated that the military is still a source of political unity to the UK, but 'this does not discourage significant numbers of their members voting for the SNP.'<sup>121</sup> It could therefore be argued that some in Scottish Regiments supported the relocation of Trident. Yet an interview with Major (retired) Alastair Campbell of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders may best describe the outlook of those serving who did not share this sentiment. Campbell stated that:

...the considerable majority of those in the forces have no sympathy with the peace movement, or any of its tenets such as unilateral disarmament. In the forces, generally, we like to think of a strong deterrent to ensure that we do not have to fight, especially the nuclear battle which is too horrible

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<sup>120</sup> Hawthorn, *Some Thoughts on an Independent Scottish Defence Force*.

<sup>121</sup> Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 35.

to contemplate. There are some who believe in the policy of the SNP – but not very many, certainly not a ‘significant number’.<sup>122</sup>

At time of writing (2004) British troops are fighting in Iraq regardless of Britain’s possession of Trident, but in all likelihood, Campbell’s view was the opinion of the majority. Furthermore, Chalmers and Walker have also noted that many Scots, including those with no affiliation with the nationalists, have taken a principled stance against nuclear weapons.<sup>123</sup> This was made evident by Labour’s questionable policy in Scotland, which consistently maintained a non-nuclear defence strategy despite the determinations of the London leadership. Finally, in 1999 the Scottish Parliament’s public petitions committee was obligated to consider Trident, though the Scotland Act reinforced central government’s monopoly on defence. In December of that year, one petition called for Parliament to conduct a review of its obligations under both Scots and international law in relation to Trident’s presence. Another requested that it reviewed the relevance of the ICJ verdict on the legality of Trident in Scotland, and a third hoped to establish that Faslane contravened the ICJ finding regarding the threat or use of nuclear weapons.<sup>124</sup> These petitions were ultimately rejected, but they served as a reminder that Trident was still a matter for some concern in Scotland. If these examples still failed to bolster our understanding of civil society’s perspective on Trident, public surveys were also of limited assistance.

Opinion polls were not subject to verifiable proof and were commonly represented as value judgements, preferences, or estimates of the outcome of future events. Most

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<sup>122</sup> Interview with Major (retired) Alastair Campbell of the Argyll and Sutherland Highland Regiment (12/08/03)

<sup>123</sup> Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 5.

<sup>124</sup> BBC News, *Petition challenge to Trident legality*, 11 December, 1999; Public Petitions Committee, 6<sup>th</sup> Meeting, Session 1, 14 December 1999 Available: [www.scottish.parliament.uk/official\\_report/cttee/petit99-00/pumop1214.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/official_report/cttee/petit99-00/pumop1214.htm). (03/09/02).

politicians regarded attitudes as more fundamental generalised predispositions, opinions as specific manifestations of underlying attitudes and values as people's ideals and the commitments they make to pursue them. Sociologist David McCrone explained that, 'opinion polls are not precision instruments, although they are frequently taken by newspapers and their readers to be such. Polls are, however, fairly crude devices for charting the general trends in public opinion as it forms and shifts around the major issues of the day.'<sup>125</sup> Though the opinions of Scots on nuclear weapons have been charted over a twenty-year period, it provided for only mixed results.

In 1980, fifty-two percent of those surveyed were against Trident in a Marplan poll for the BBC's *Panorama* programme, and fifty-nine percent against the system in a Marplan/Weekend World poll nearly a fortnight after.<sup>126</sup> In October 1982 a *Glasgow Herald* survey suggested that fifty-five percent of all surveyed were 'not in favour' of Britain acquiring Trident, though that same survey revealed that fifty-six percent of those polled believed Britain 'should have' a nuclear deterrent.<sup>127</sup> In 1984 a Gallup poll for CND suggested that sixty-three percent were against Trident, and by 1987 a System 3 poll commissioned by the SCND assumed that only twenty-three percent of Scots were in favour of the British continuing with Trident if the US and the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw medium-range missiles from Europe.<sup>128</sup> In the post-Cold War era the picture becomes even less transparent. In 1991 a Gallup poll for Bradford University's Department of Peace Studies found that just previous to the 1987 general election, sixty-seven per cent of those polled would have been unhappy with only the

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<sup>125</sup> D. McCrone, 'Opinion Polls In Scotland: July 1998-June 1999', *Scottish Affairs* ( no.28. Summer 1999), p.38.

<sup>126</sup> SRT, *Taking Out Moscow*, p. 9.

<sup>127</sup> *GH*, 18 October 1982, p. 1.

two superpowers possessing nuclear weapons, while fifty-five per cent supported a British deterrent. However, sixty-nine per cent of those polled were also opposed to the launching of missiles against a Soviet attack on the UK. Therefore, while a majority believed in retaining a British deterrent in this instance, an even greater proportion was not prepared to use these weapons.<sup>129</sup> Finally, previous to the May elections for the Scottish Parliament a Teletext poll carried out in April 1999 asked whether Scotland should have nuclear weapons, with eighty-five per cent responding in the negative.<sup>130</sup>

If we adopt McCrone's definition of surveys at this time and apply it to the seven polls provided above, it becomes clear as to why these studies play a limited role in the government's decision-making process. While it appears that Trident was unpopular both in Scotland and throughout the rest of the UK, two surveys revealed that the British electorate believed it necessary to maintain a deterrent though one argued that the system should be maintained but not used. Firstly, if central government was not prepared to use its deterrent under the most extreme circumstances it ultimately undermined the very act of deterrence. Secondly, for those who suggested that Polaris should be retained while discarding the Trident option, it becomes obvious to central government that those surveyed appreciated the need for deterrence yet failed to grasp the repercussions of technical advancements with Russian capabilities at that time. Disregarding the matter of usage, it was nonsensical to maintain a system that did not serve as an effective deterrent and central government believed that only Trident could provide the crucial advantage at that time. If we placed these results into a hypothetical situation where politicians

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<sup>128</sup> SRT, *Taking Out Moscow*, p. 9.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

actually executed policy under the guidance of public opinion, arguments against Trident were severely incapacitated. For politicians these polls implied that it was nuclear war that was highly unpopular amongst civil society, and central government would argue that Trident was the reason this did not occur. Therefore, when considering the people of Scotland and their collective attitudes towards Trident one is forced to acknowledge that the poor evidence currently available provides no definitive conclusions.

## **Conclusion**

Scotland's status as a quasi-autonomous state provided for certain advantages and improved security throughout the Cold War was one of these benefits. Yet there is little doubt that the SSBN provided for internalised complication within the three traditional cornerstones of Scottish civil society. The prosecution of thousands of activists represented an administrative nightmare for Scottish courts, economic uncertainty encouraged Scottish universities to pursue research that had the potential for public criticism, and the larger denominations amongst Scotland's religious community were pressured to take preventative measures so as not to alienate adherents. Other components were just as susceptible to the various pitfalls of Trident. Local authorities affiliated with the NFLA had to be mindful of the much needed employment opportunities the SSBN was thought to provide, and the STUC, heavily influenced by CPGB ideologues and concerns for the proletariat, conceivably estranged thousands of civilian employees at Coulport, Faslane and Rosyth. Furthermore, a plague of contradiction spread throughout the Scottish print media

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<sup>130</sup> SCND Magazine, Available: [www.cndscot.dial.pipex.com/magazine/nfs997c.htm](http://www.cndscot.dial.pipex.com/magazine/nfs997c.htm), (02/07/02)

which, at a local level, often put forth the message it believed its public wanted to hear while delivering nothing less than obscurity at a national level. It is clear that a sophisticated combination of economics and ethics inevitably shaped the determinations of these components, and Scots themselves were no less susceptible to these conditions.

Against this background, there were an incalculable number of citizens who chose not to crash Faslane's gates yet maintained a principled stance against nuclear weapons. But while some of these citizens might have argued 'ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid' there were Trident's advocates who believed that without a dollar 'ye're deid' nonetheless. With the situation as such, Scottish civil society was left diffused and incapable of establishing a dominant rallying force that worked against Trident. The world's most powerful submarine weapons platform had effectively penetrated society's malleable foundations.

It is immediately recognised that the system also highlighted obligations that were linked with the role of the welfare state. This, of course, was relevant to a number of subjects, including matters of economy and foreign affairs. However, the benefits of Union definitely came with a price and accommodation of the Trident system represented one such fee. Yet it should be noted that Trident's placement north of the Border did nothing to convince a majority of the Scottish electorate that separation was a reasonable alternative.<sup>131</sup> Because Scots had become familiar with Polaris, both the Conservative and Labour governments were granted the luxury of only

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<sup>131</sup> Scotland as an independent state would need to assemble a credible Scottish Defence Force from the ground up with the new establishment at least considering the need for a national deterrent. This, in itself, presented a daunting task. Hawthorn, *Some Thoughts on an Independent Scottish Defence Force*.

occasionally having to address the Trident issue from time to time. One must also recognise that a significant number of people appreciated the opportunities and security the national deterrent provided, and an even greater amount took pride from the contributions Scotland made to the British military establishment. The situation could therefore be described as such: a minority either challenged or championed the deterrent but the overall reaction to Trident was characterised through disinterest and fluctuating degrees of ambivalence. It is this situation which the disarmament movement was left to contend with.

## **Chapter Five: Scotland and the disarmament movement**

In the midst of the Cold War Trident inspired both the British and international disarmament movements to make clear their intentions to have the system decommissioned and promptly towed from the river Clyde. Yet with the collapse of the Soviet Union came a decline in public urgency, and the safe, successful peacetime operation of the system also caused the movement to lose support in Scotland. Employment provided by the system fed families, regardless of the state of international relations, and it was this factor which served to weaken further the movement's popularity. To this day their efforts continue. After numerous conversations with leaders from both defunct and currently existing protest organisations, including groups such as the SCND and the Scottish Campaign to Resist the Atomic Menace (SCRAM), it has been revealed that the movement confronted a number of obstacles and employed several strategies during their years of protest. As will be seen, they ultimately enjoyed only limited success in the 1979-99 time frame. Therefore, the intention of this chapter is to break down their collective experience and the vast quantities of materials these organisations have produced has been of immeasurable assistance in constructing a more precise understanding of their struggle to maintain opposition to Trident. However, while it was the intention of these groups to convince the Scottish electorate, and its political leadership, that Trident was the wrong way forward, it is first necessary to retrace the events that led to the creation of the British disarmament movement.

## The anti-Polaris movement

Without the formation of Britain's CND, a political pressure group, both the Scottish and world-wide debate with such weaponry would have been far less developed by the time the Thatcher government opted to acquire the Trident system. Thirteen years before to the formation of Greenpeace and four decades before the first series of non-violent direct-actions by Trident Ploughshares, articles written by Bertrand Russell and J.B. Priestley questioning the validity of the nuclear bomb inspired concerned citizens to establish CND in London in 1958.<sup>1</sup> According to the former Labour Party leader Michael Foot, the creation of CND 'made our country the most active and vocal in the world in attempting to rouse mankind to an awareness of the nuclear horror'.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the London-based movement provided the spark that inspired the creation of the Scottish campaign that same year. The autonomous SCND was formed in Glasgow with its own unique objections initially focused on the testing of nuclear weapons and the increasing threat of nuclear warfare.<sup>3</sup> Unlike much of the Christian peace movement, the group was not a pacifist organisation though it was opposed to the possession of these weapons. It was concerns with the influence of nuclear weapons over local issues that ultimately characterised the distinctly Scottish aspect of SCND.<sup>4</sup> With the arrival of the US Navy's own Polaris fleet in the Holy Loch after 1961, the SCND set aside its concerns with testing and refocused its energies. It was robust support from the likes of the CPGB, the STUC, local

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<sup>1</sup> Articles written by Russell were concerned with the abolition of the bomb while Priestley wrote that people should 'lead the way to nuclear sanity'. Foot, *Dr. Strangelove*, p. 68.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 68-72.

<sup>3</sup> National CND branches also included Welsh and Irish CND, which also started in 1958-1959. Interview with John Goodwillie, Irish CND (03/31/03).

<sup>4</sup> A. Carter, *Campaigns for Peace: British peace movements in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century since 1945* (Manchester: MUP, 1992), p. 153.

authorities, Scotland's Labour Party and thousands of ordinary citizens that fuelled the movement at its earliest stages.

It was the physical presence of the American Polaris fleet that initially bolstered the SCND's determination to have nuclear weapons removed from Scottish waterways. After CND marches to Aldermaston in April 1958 Harold Macmillan purchased Skybolt in exchange for the US Navy's use of the Holy Loch in March 1960, and it was this decision that initially thrust Scotland into the 'centre of superpower and military block rivalries'.<sup>5</sup> Thereafter, the arrival of Fleet Ballistic Missile Refit Site One, USS *Proteus*, and the first American boats incited intense responses both in Scotland and throughout the wider UK. Despite the then maturing state of the Anglo-American special relationship, it is unquestionable that a foreign nuclear presence provoked previously inactive supporters of the disarmament movement to respond, as marches soon attracted considerable attention throughout the British press (Photograph 5.1). On 4 March 1961 the SCND, working in conjunction with the Direct Action Committee Against Nuclear Weapons (DAC), assembled roughly 1,000 fellow activists who marched from the loch-side community of Dunoon to the Holy Loch in opposition to its American defender.<sup>6</sup> Several demonstrations were also held on 14 May, and on 20-21 May, with the latter representing an escalation of the movement's efforts.<sup>7</sup> However, in the midst of the Cold War the deterrence value of the Polaris, regardless of its foreign status, soothed much of Britain's post-1945 security concerns and thus remained firmly in place. Though many people would

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<sup>5</sup> Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> The DAC was committed to non-violent methods of resistance (*Satyagraha*) developed by Gandhi during India's struggle for freedom.

<sup>7</sup> The 14 May march attracted roughly 2,000, with a rally addressed by Michael Foot. While the 20 May demonstration executed a 'sea action' by attempting to board US boats, the 21 May protest featured a 'land action' to occupy two piers used by submarine crews. R.K.S. Taylor and C. Pritchard,

**Photograph 5.1: SCND march from the 1960s**



*The protest makers: the British nuclear disarmament movement of 1958-1965, twenty years on* (London: Pergamon Press, 1980), p. 138.

come to accept the SSBN, these four demonstrations established a precedent and served as a useful model for future demonstrations in both Scotland and the international community.

Polaris was received in Scotland with a greater degree of ambivalence than that which was later produced through Thatcher's decision to procure the Vanguard class. With the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki a not-so-distant memory, Scottish reactions to the US presence generally proved predictable if not monumental. After the explosions over Japan, world-wide hysteria with nuclear weaponry was reinforced by anxieties brought about by the Cold War and its Cuban Missile Crisis, fears which were dictated by the state of relations between the US and USSR. Author Robert H. Patterson went as far as stating that the UK's 'reduced status in the international community' post-1945 had 'manifested itself in a fear of nuclear war'.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the introduction of Polaris to the Holy Loch highlighted improvements in nuclear weapon technologies, with the system becoming a rallying force and the now immortalised protest song *Ding Dong Dollar* becoming the anthem of the movement in Scotland (Appendix D).<sup>9</sup>

Despite the implications of these marches, the influence of the movement was compromised through the economic advantages of Polaris and, eventually, the opportunity for greater Scottish autonomy. A former US serviceman stationed at the Holy Loch in 1961 described the reception of *Proteus* as 'cordial' and the Provost,

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<sup>8</sup> R.H. Patterson, *Britain's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: From Before the V-Bomber to Beyond Trident* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1997), p. 123.

<sup>9</sup> *Ding Dong Dollar* was written when Glaswegian John Mack heard George MacLeod of the Iona Community say 'You cannot spend a dollar when you are dead'. John Smith got the basic chorus idea, then it was refined and Jim McLean joined in the working up of the verses. Interview with John Powles, Glasgow Caledonian University Centre for Political Song (08/03/03)

C. S. McPhail, said she hoped that the Americans would be treated not as visitors but as 'part of the fabric of the town'.<sup>10</sup> The US Navy was indeed at the centre of controversy at that time, but commercial factors frequently countered objections from the movement as American sailors on shore leave brought with them their hard-earned monies to surrounding communities. It appears that the arrival of the British system near Helensburgh in 1968 also brought forth a similar degree of dependency. Because of this, the intensity of the Polaris debate in Scotland subsided. By 1969 Polaris accounted for nearly 1,800 civilian employees and throughout the 1970s economic depression solidified the relationship between both the deterrent and the community. If the movement hoped to inspire the decommissioning of Trident it would therefore need to consider the potential for substantial unemployment and overcome a history of familiarity with Polaris, improved security and safe operation.

### **The anti-Trident movement**

At a time when the BBC's award-winning drama documentary, *Threads*, illustrated the horrendous impact of a nuclear exchange upon British society, Trident encouraged the SCND to establish numerous connections and explore new strategies. This established a superior degree of complexity, in terms of organisation, to that of the anti-Polaris campaign.<sup>11</sup> Though the SCND often spearheaded anti-Trident activities in Scotland, it further utilised a two-tier system of interdependency that allowed the organisation to network with the international disarmament movement, recognise and

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<sup>10</sup> *SubRon 14 and Scotland*, Available: <http://thistlegroup.net/holyloch/history.htm> (13/03.03).

<sup>11</sup> In 1984 *Threads* depicted the holocaust through the eyes of two people from two months before to thirteen years after the holocaust. Viewers are treated to a graphically disturbing portrayal of the medieval conditions that would prevail after such a conflict, including starvation, nuclear winter, disease, psychological trauma, illiteracy and both mental and physical mutation. After discussions with the CND, Greenpeace UK, Ploughshares, and SCND it was discovered that records pertaining to the

support local groups and work in unison with specialist sections that either disrupted the operation of the SSBN, applied political pressure or challenged the intrinsic worth of nuclear deterrence. Furthermore, this loosely knit pattern of cooperation allowed the movement rigorously to monitor military activities while the SCND often acted as collection point for intelligence. Information for the SCND was then dispersed amongst other independent organisations, as well as local groups and specialist sections, and used either to disrupt the operation of the SSBN through planned actions or assist in organised demonstrations. Therefore, the circulation of information between individual bodies served to empower protest organisations as a whole.

While the SCND's efforts were consistently reinforced by CND and the Christian peace movement, over the years it maintained cooperation with other independent organisations such as Greenpeace UK, SCRAM, the NFLA and Trident Ploughshares while also creating the alternative Scottish Campaign Against Trident (SCAT) campaign.<sup>12</sup> Both Greenpeace UK and SCRAM viewed nuclear weapons as an environmental issue yet from 1987 the former demonstrated against nuclear-armed and powered warships while SCRAM temporarily addressed the Trident issue in Scotland as the SCND's popularity peaked during the early 1980s.<sup>13</sup> These groups served a supportive role while the NFLA, Ploughshares and SCAT were considerably more aggressive in their approach. Both the CND and the NFLA attempted to publicise the effects of nuclear war and the false sense of security that civil defence

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disarmament movement were not adequately maintained. Interviews brought some clarity to the issue. Furthermore, the disarmament movement used the Internet extensively to document its activities.

<sup>12</sup> For examples of groups within the international movement and their work in Scotland see A. Zelter, *Trident on Trial: The Case for People's Disarmament* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Greenpeace was formed in 1971 and worked with Greenpeace UK, formed in 1977. Both viewed nuclear weapons as an environment issue. See M. Brown and J. May, *The Greenpeace Story* (London: Dorling Kindersley, 1989). Formed in November 1975 as an umbrella group of Friends of the Earth, the Conservation Society and the Edinburgh University Ecological Society, SCRAM ended when it

plans provided.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, like the DAC of the 1960s, Ploughshares believed there was a distinct need for non-violent direct action and did not operate from Scotland exclusively because Trident sites were scattered throughout Britain, with each considered to be legitimate targets for actions.<sup>15</sup> However, according to Iain Leitch SCAT was simply an attempt by the SCND to widen its own appeal. Though dates are unclear it was formed when the SCND considered that a broader based campaign against Trident was necessary to take account of the extent of opposition to Trident even among supporters of the Polaris deterrent. SCAT was a successful campaign in that it reached and was supported by a wide spectrum of Scottish society, though the campaign was merged with SCND when Trident was initially deployed in the early 1990s.<sup>16</sup> The creation of a vast network allowed the movement in Scotland to establish credible links with both domestic and foreign disarmament groups, making the government's objectives all the more difficult.

Local groups were the primary unit of organisation for SCND while specialist sections functioned as the movement's eyes and ears. Though the SCND promoted and facilitated their own activities, over a twenty-year period an undetermined number of local groups were established from Aberdeen to Dumbarton and Dunfermline. Unquestionably, the permanence of these groups varied as their numbers experienced steady decline following a spike in membership during the early 1980s, and further deterioration after the collapse of the Soviet Union, presenting figures that often fluctuated according to international and or local developments.

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merged with Friends of the Earth in the early 1990s. Interview with Peter Roche, co-founder of SCRAM (27/03/03).

<sup>14</sup> Half of Scotland's sixty-five regional and district councils opposed the nuclear arms race. *GH*, 1 July 1982, p. 4; Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 167.

<sup>15</sup> Based in Norfolk, it was launched in Hiroshima, Gothenburg, Gent, Edinburgh and London in May 1998. Interview with David McKenzie, media officer for Trident Ploughshares (12/03/03).

The key function of the specialist section was to further the cause of the movement as sections like Christian, Student and Trade Union CND spread the message of unilateral disarmament throughout Scotland's religious communities, universities and unions.<sup>17</sup> Faslane Peace Camp, Nukewatch UK and Rosyth Watch were indispensable specialist sections diligent in monitoring and blocking the transport of nuclear warheads to and from the Coulport/Faslane area, observing and sometimes attempting to obstruct submarine patrols entering and exiting the Clyde or surveying refitting and refuelling operations of SSBNs at Rosyth Dockyard.<sup>18</sup> Of these, Faslane Peace Camp had established itself as the most recognisable specialist section in Scotland if not all of Britain. Inspired by Greenham Common woman's camp and their struggle against the GLCM, in June 1982 members of the SCND, the anti-nuclear group Parents for Survival and the Ecology Party (later the Green Party) established the camp with the assistance of Strathclyde Regional Council.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, the SCND also concentrated on applying political pressure to Trident through specialist sections like Green, Labour, Liberal and SNP CND, which encouraged their respective MPs to campaign against the proliferation of nuclear weapons.<sup>20</sup> However, Sociologist Paul Byrne has noted that certain sections had been accused of being more 'concerned with importing political disagreements into the movement rather than exporting the unilateralist message' from time to time.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> SCAT was chaired by Ian Leitch of Dumbarton District Council. Interview with Leitch (07/03/03).

<sup>17</sup> Christian CND was composed of many denominations, questioning the morality of Trident. Origins and related statistics for these groups were unavailable.

<sup>18</sup> Inspired by Nukewatch US, peace activists concerned with the 'elimination' of nuclear weapons organised Polaris Watch in the summer of 1985, which later became Nukewatch UK. It conducted a programme to monitor and expose the transportation of nuclear weapons in unmarked trucks. Interview with Jane Tallents of Nukewatch UK (006/03/03). Information on Rosyth Watch was unavailable. Interview with Ainslie (25/03/03)

<sup>19</sup> In September 1981 a women's march from Cardiff arrived at Greenham Common US Air Force base in Berkshire, where the first Cruise missiles were to be based. What was at first a temporary camp soon became permanent. Interview with Graham X of Faslane Peace Camp (12/03/03). Interview with Taggart (28/02/03); *GH*, 16 June 1982, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Taggart (28/02/03).

<sup>21</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 123.

As a whole, general statistics pertaining to the movement in Scotland, and records of the SCND's local groups, specialist sections, executive committees and chairpersons, were unclear. Scouring the SCND's Annual General Meeting notes revealed that executive committees and selected chairpersons were established during the early 1980s and came together on a yearly basis to discuss campaign priorities.<sup>22</sup> Records pertaining to membership were just slightly more informative. According to Byrne, British CND offered two types of membership; national members who paid an annual subscription to national CND and local members who subscribed to their local group. He further acknowledged that the CND's total membership at the end of 1986 was roughly 86,000, based largely in England rather than the rest of the UK, and by 1988 89 per cent of CND members lived in England, 6 per cent in Scotland, 5 per cent in Wales and less than 1 per cent in Ireland.<sup>23</sup> For the SCND this figure represented a clear disadvantage as they represented a distinct minority to that of overall Scottish population percentages. Finally, Burn described the social composition of CND's membership in the 1980s as comparable to that of the 1960s with membership remaining predominantly middle-class, 'overwhelmingly' potential Labour voters, evenly balanced between the sexes and concentrated in the 25-40 age-group.<sup>24</sup> With limited financial and human resources the SCND would have to make do.

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<sup>22</sup> By the 1980s SCND shifted from a democratic structure and was broken down to an executive committee. 'People simply worked together'. Interview with Tallents (06/03/03). An accurate chronology was not available for SCND Chairpersons and executive committees; however, mentioned names included Billy Wolfe, Neil Crookshank, Keith Bovey, and Iain Davison. Interview with Brian Quail, joint secretary SCND (01/03/03).

<sup>23</sup> Similar to local groups and its apparent lack of information in either quantitative or chronological terms, membership statistics for organisations remained blurred due to enlistment inconsistencies or because certain members preferred to retain their anonymity. New memberships often rose after significant events. The arrival of Trident to Faslane in October 1992 gathered 100 new memberships for SCND, though many never renewed. Anonymity was an issue best exemplified by members of the Faslane Peace Camp who often referred to themselves on a first name basis only. Interview with Ainslie (25/03/03) Roche (27/03/03) and Leitch (07/03/03). Byrne, *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 55.

<sup>24</sup> One-third of CND's members also belonged to a trade union, one-quarter to a political party, one fifth to a church and two-thirds of CND also members of other peace organisations. Furthermore,

## Strategies of the movement

In March 1986 Margaret Morton, in the left-nationalist magazine, *Radical Scotland*, explained that, 'it was essential to build up opposition to Trident in the early stages, before it gained political credibility and before investment decisions were made'.<sup>25</sup> In its drive to discourage Trident's implementation in Scotland the disarmament movement conducted numerous campaigns which included Greenpeace UK's 1987 'Nuclear Free Seas' strategy, the CND's early 1990s 'Scrap Trident' campaign and Ploughshares 1998 'Tri-denting It' action. However, the CND's 1985 'Basic Case' strategy proved most controversial. In the aftermath of the 1983 general election the Thatcher government's consideration of both the GLCM and Trident encouraged the CND to integrate their policies against these specific systems and focus public opinion more on the basic fundamentals of disarmament. Yet it was argued that progress with the Trident campaign at a national level 'writhed' because the strategy detracted considerably from a well understood purpose, opposition to two distinct systems, with a concept 'so vague as to make it meaningless'.<sup>26</sup> Helen Steven of the Iona Community further agreed that CND's emphasis on the GLCM ultimately weakened the anti-Trident movement in Scotland, though Brian Quail, joint secretary for SCND, believed that campaigns before the 'Basic Case' strategy assisted the public in understanding individual systems and their unique capabilities.<sup>27</sup>

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women activists were often arrested during protests. Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 55.

<sup>25</sup> M. Morton, 'The Politics of Trident', *Radical Scotland* (February/March 1986), p. 9. *Radical Scotland* was a one-off edition intended to assume the role of Crann Tara magazine. Kevin Dunion took over and it was relaunched in 1982. It was created because of the loss of national self confidence in the devolution project following the referendum in 1978. It represented the strand of left nationalist; maxi devolutionist approach to self-government. The magazine was also an important forum for anti nuclear politics. The last issue was in 1991. Interview with Kevin Dunion, former editor for *Radical Scotland* (23/04/03)

<sup>26</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 150.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Helen Steven, Iona Community (04/03/03) and Brian Quail (03/06/03).

Whether or not Thatcher's brief period of contemplation between two systems was some premeditated move to disorganise the movement remains to be seen, but the 'Basic Case' strategy became strained as it was ultimately balanced between either being too academic or desperately generalised. Had this been Thatcher's intention, it proved highly effective. However, it might also be the case that the inadequacy of the strategy and any complications it produced were over-exaggerated as Michael Foot emphasised that 'campaigns for nuclear disarmament show a familiar pattern; they may rise suddenly to the highest pitch of excitement, but then relapse into a seeming slothfulness'.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, with the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, the assignment of 900 SS-20s to Eastern Europe and the installation of the GLCM and Pershing missiles in Western Europe it was highly improbable that any campaign, regardless of the extent of public support, was capable of preventing the government's replacement of Polaris.

The disarmament movement was comprised of several pressure groups, a term normally used to denote a type of informal political organisation whose activities sometimes had a great influence on national decision-making processes. A pressure group must include the bulk of the people, organisations and companies in the sphere of its concern in order to be acceptable to governments as a representative for that interest. Furthermore, pressure groups tried to achieve change they saw as desirable by political action, and to prevent changes regarded as undesirable.<sup>29</sup> Because the disarmament movement was an agency of political representation, communication and participation, the movement had close organisational links with political parties. Both Labour CND and SNP CND were two examples. The disarmament movement

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<sup>28</sup> Foot, *Dr. Strangelove*, p. 187.

<sup>29</sup> W.N. Coxall, *Parties and Pressure Groups* (London: Longman, 1986), pp. 16-19.

was also composed of what could be described as promotional groups. These groups were held together by a shared attitude, and they sought to promote a particular cause.<sup>30</sup> Consequently, it sought influence at all levels simultaneously and generally focused its efforts on public opinion, the media, various ministries, central government and local authorities.<sup>31</sup> Yet the British disarmament movement never achieved the level of success that other groups experienced.

In the last days of the 1983-87 Parliament, the Thatcher government abolished domestic rates and introduced a flat-rate charge, or 'community charge'. The fact that the legislation applied to Scotland alone at that time led to accusations that the country was being singled out. Under these circumstances, an early symbolic victory was scored when the 'poll tax' label replaced the term 'community charge'.<sup>32</sup> Opposition became overwhelming, and in 1987 a labour movement campaign was launched in Edinburgh, with steps taken in the west of Scotland, particularly in Pollok, to organise anti-poll tax unions. The anti-poll tax movement deliberately linked the struggle in Scotland with the battle that was likely to develop on an all-British scale, and in March 1988 at the Labour Party Scottish conference, delegates argued the case for defiance.<sup>33</sup> On the day the conference had opened, a poll showed forty-two per cent in Scotland favoured an illegal non-payment campaign against the poll tax. The charges gradually began to rise and millions refused to pay, with enforcement measures becoming increasingly draconian. Unrest mounted and culminated in a number of riots, including a brawl in Trafalgar Square where more

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<sup>30</sup> W.N. Coxall, *Parties and Pressure Groups* (London: Longman, 1986), pp. 16-19.

<sup>31</sup> Pressure groups rarely stand for office, they have no aspirations to form a government, they do not put forward candidates at elections and they do not seek to exercise power directly. *ibid.*, pp. 16-19.

<sup>32</sup> The poll tax provoked the Peasant's Revolt after it was first levied in 1380 to finance a war against France. The 'community charge' was a fixed tax per adult resident, hence a poll tax, although there was to be a reduction for low-income people. Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government*, p. 274.

than 200,000 marched in London on 31 March 1990. The Conservative Party was forced to abandon the poll tax after it came to the conclusion that their party was doomed to electoral defeat if the tax remained.<sup>34</sup> The disarmament movement struggled to establish a comparable level of public concern.

Because the first delivery to Scotland of Trident's warheads would not arrive until the mid-1990s, the movement attempted to sustain public awareness in the interim by maintaining its resistance to Polaris while producing publications that addressed controversial topics such as economic, environmental or safety-related characteristics of Trident. Greenpeace UK produced several publications such as *The UK's Involvement in the Naval Nuclear Arms Race* in 1987 and *The Problems of the Trident Programme* in July 1991, both of which considered the economic burden of the system to the British taxpayer or the probability and effects of a serious nuclear accident on the Clyde.<sup>35</sup> Numerous CND publications similar to Malcolm Dando and Paul Rodgers's *The Death of Deterrence* also offered information pertaining to Trident's offensive capabilities while the SCND established monthly instalments of *Scottish CND News* in May 1983, which later went on to become *Nuclear Free Scotland* sometime in 1988.<sup>36</sup> Articles such as 'US Trident in Scotland: New Evidence' and 'Trash Trident: Bin the Bomb' made for common literature within this Scottish periodical, and addressed the modernisation of the US deterrent in the Holy

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<sup>33</sup> Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government*, p. 274.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Heseltine successfully challenged Thatcher's leadership and eventually replaced the community charge with the council tax at the start of the 1993/1994 financial year. See D. Butler, A. Adonis and T. Travers, *Failure in British Government: The Politics of the Poll Tax* (Oxford: OUP, 1994). Mitchell, *Strategies for Self-Government*, p. 278.

<sup>35</sup> *The UK's Involvement in the Naval Nuclear Arms Race* (London: Greenpeace UK, 1987); *Naval Nuclear Bases: The Costs to the Clyde* (London: Greenpeace UK, July 1988); *GP Problems of the Trident Programme* (London: Greenpeace UK, 1991).

<sup>36</sup> Dando and Rodgers discussed Trident's capabilities, and revealed that the system made it possible for one country to destroy an opponents command and control systems and arsenal in a first-strike. M. Dando and P. Rodgers, *The Death of Deterrence*; Interview with Ainslie (25/03/03).

Loch or questioned the utility of the system.<sup>37</sup> In order to address the concerns of civilian employees of Trident shore facilities the SCND, in collaboration with the STUC, also released *Trident in Scotland: Not Safe, Not Economic, Not Wanted* in 1994, arguing that resources freed by 'axing' Trident could be applied to rebuilding infrastructure.<sup>38</sup> Finally, published by the SCND comprehensive documents such as February 1994's *The Safety of Trident: An Assessment of the Radiation Risks Associated with the UK Trident Programme* addressed a number of environmental issues while March 1999's *Trident: Britain's Weapon of Mass Destruction* discussed the threat of Trident in the post-Cold War era.<sup>39</sup> Though this was merely a reasonable sample of the materials produced, several of these documents were strategically placed to coincide with the arrival and/or operation of Trident SSBNs.<sup>40</sup>

Over the years the disarmament movement established a respectable understanding of the system, and after the 1990 Drell Commission and the 1992 Oxburgh Report highlighted complications Trident was experiencing in various stages, British and Scottish CNDs were diligent in processing this information for public consumption. In mid-1990, the Drell Report raised serious concerns about the design of the missile and argued that Trident featured an explosive propellant that could misfire in the

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<sup>37</sup> 'US Trident in Scotland: New Evidence', *Scottish CND News* (August-September 1987), p. 6; 'Trash Trident: Bin the Bomb', *Nuclear Free Scotland* (April 1996), p. 3.

<sup>38</sup> *Trident in Scotland: No Safe, Not Economic, Not Wanted* (Glasgow: STUC and SCND, 1994), p. 23.

<sup>39</sup> *The Safety of Trident* discussed in detail issues like environmental hazards associated with the nuclear reactors and warheads and the reliability of computer systems while *Britain's Weapons of Mass Destruction* argued that the theory of nuclear deterrence was fatally undermined. The first was released to MPs on the Defence Select Committee as HMS Victorious was set to arrive in Scotland. *Britain's Weapon of Mass Destruction* was strategically issued previous to the elections for Scottish Parliament and the arrival of HMS Vengeance. See SCND, *The Safety of Trident: An Assessment of the Radiation Risks Associated with the UK Trident Programme* (Glasgow: Scottish CND, 1994) and J. Ainslie, *Trident: Britain's Weapon of Mass Destruction* (Glasgow: SCND, March 1999).

<sup>40</sup> Ploughshares also produced the *Trident Ploughshares: Tri-denting It Handbook* 'The Pledge to Prevent Nuclear Crime' said it was the duty of every citizen to uphold the law relating to nuclear weapons and that all should work to carefully, safely and peacefully disarm any weapon that breaches humanitarian law. *Tri-denting it* (Norfolk: Trident Ploughshares, 1999), p. 9.1.

earliest stages of flight.<sup>41</sup> When the Defence Committee questioned the Ministry of Defence concerning the implications for the British system, it stated that it was prevented from releasing any information relating to the design of the American warhead.<sup>42</sup> Naturally, the disarmament movement considered this to be an unsatisfactory development. Furthermore, in July 1992 the government also agreed to appoint a new nuclear weapons safety watchdog after the chief scientific adviser to the Ministry believed that budget and manpower cuts could affect safety. Consequently, the Oxburgh Report recommended that the nuclear weapon safety champion had the ability to discharge a large number of responsibilities.<sup>43</sup> Though detailed information on this matter remains classified, several improvements were made according to the Defence Committee and revisions in safety guidelines did take place. Both actions ultimately provided little comfort for groups like the SCND. However, it must be acknowledged that consistent pressure from external groups like the SCND provided an extra incentive for the Ministry of Defence to perform its operations scrupulously.

Full-blown demonstrations were vital in rallying public opinion against Trident, but stringent economic guidelines and geographic location certainly encouraged the movement to be selective in its use of such activities in Scotland. Based on previous experiences mass demonstrations outside of London were unlikely to 'draw more than 30,000 people' despite the fact that there was considerable agitation by activists to mount more events outside of the capital.<sup>44</sup> Though demonstrations held in Hyde Park

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<sup>41</sup> *TT*, 20 December 1990, p. 2.

<sup>42</sup> Eighth Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 286 of Session 1990-91, p. 9.

<sup>43</sup> Second Report from the Defence Committee, *The Progress of the Trident Programme*, HC 297 of Session 1993-94, p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 167.

from 1981-1983 attracted roughly 250,000 to 400,000 per event, the suggested figure for events in Scotland was upheld when in April 1982 SCAT organised rallies in Glasgow and Dundee. Police estimates at that time placed the turnout at roughly 10,000 while conflicting reports suggested 30,000 (**Photograph 5.2, 5.3**).<sup>45</sup> The SCND further organised events to correspond with the October 1992 arrival of HMS *Vanguard*.<sup>46</sup> However, *The Glasgow Herald* described the event in Helensburgh as 'an uneventful passage to Faslane' for the boat as several 'hundred' people gathered at the shoreline. A majority of this figure was not affiliated with the movement.<sup>47</sup> Media attention such as this only served to incapacitate the movement. With limited access to the necessary economic and human resources, and serious implications unavoidably linked to the public's reduced participation, the SCND recognised that smaller demonstrations in Scotland were detrimental to the cause. Consequently these efforts were reinterpreted as either actions or blockades to compensate for their lower attendance figures.

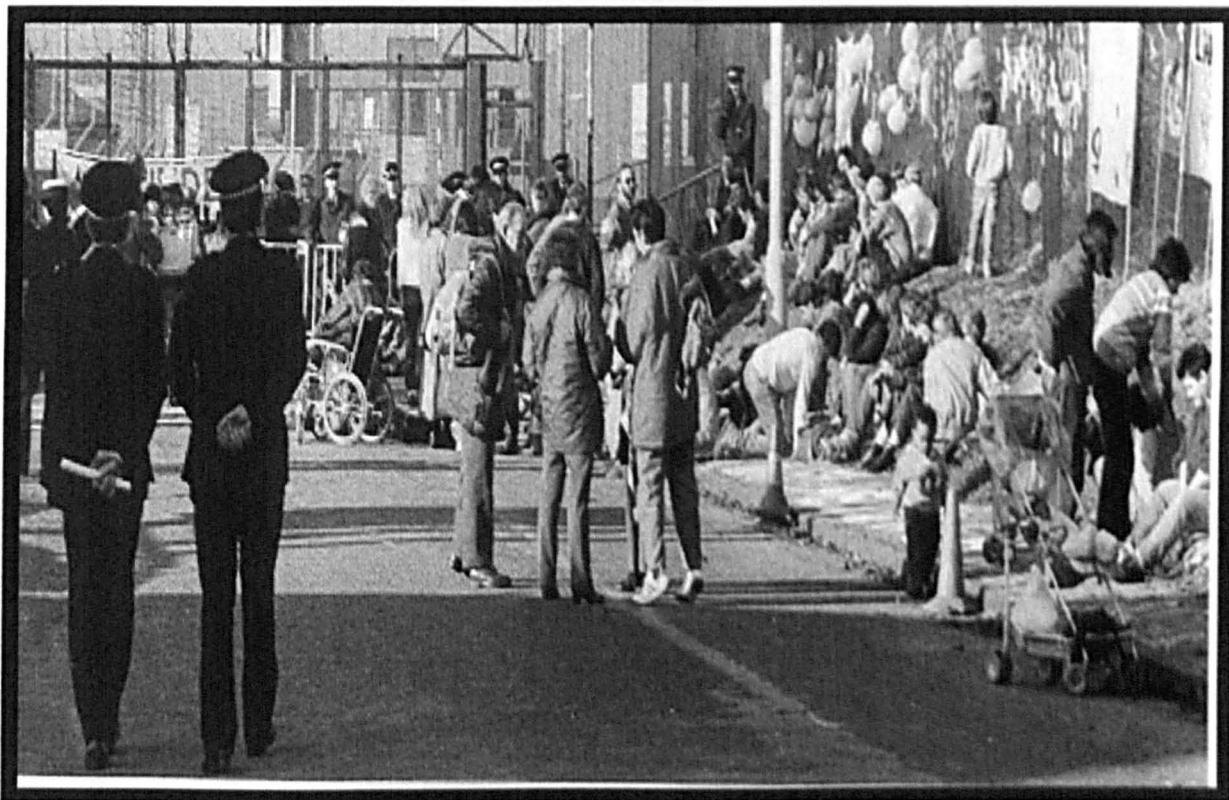
Though actions and blockades relied heavily on an activist's willingness to participate in some form of non-violent direct action, and thus be at greater risk of arrest, the decision to conduct flurries of these activities after the arrival of HMS *Vanguard* often provided the necessary media exposure in which the movement could broadcast its disarmament message. Since the arrival of Polaris these operations encompassed an assortment of tactics that included spontaneous presentations, bonfires, premeditated interruption of submarines while navigating through Scottish lochs and

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<sup>45</sup> Events were supported by the Tory Reform Group, the Quakers, CND local groups and members from the Labour movement. *GH*, 12 April 1982, p. 4; Byrne, *Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 167

<sup>46</sup> The arrival of the first boat was expected to draw considerable support for the movement but failed to generate the same figures as Polaris in 1961. Interview with Ainslie (25/03/03)

**Photograph 5.2: Demonstration at Faslane (North Gate)**



The date of this event is unclear but according to staff at the Helensburgh Library it is assumed this event was held during the mid to late 1980s

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<sup>47</sup> *GH*, 26 October 1996, p. 2. For more on the public's reaction to the arrivals of the remaining submarines see *GT*, 26 October 1992, p. 1; *GT*, 25 May 1994, p. 1; *LH*, 29 March 1996, p. 9.

**Photograph 5.3: Demonstration outside Faslane (1996)**



the blockading of Faslane itself or warhead transports. While the act of spray painting slogans like 'Ban Trident' upon the Palace of Westminster or a bonfire action at Faslane hardly amused law enforcers or many of Scotland's Christian activists, these exercises effectively demonstrated the intensity of deep-seated emotions that many protesters associated with the system. Attempts physically to disrupt the patrols of massive boats while they traversed the Clyde also became a featured item for the movement as countless numbers of activists, with little regard for their own personal safety, attempted to swim into the path of these boats after their systematic arrival to the Gareloch. Furthermore, the blockading of Faslane had been accompanied by a multitude of operations that included activists chaining themselves to rails, damaging fences that surrounded shore facilities and frequent incidents of illegal trespass. While these actions were predominantly conducted in the west of Scotland, the movement's interference of warhead convoys occurred throughout the wider UK.<sup>48</sup>

After 1992 the motorway transport of warheads and the deliberate interruption of such convoys were topics of discussion that deserved special attention. Over the course of its journey, two Trident warheads were placed into special containers and transported to Coulport within a specially articulated Truck Cargo Heavy-Duty Mark 2 (TCHD Mk2) vehicle. Under civilian and Ministry of Defence police escort, convoys of three to five TCHD Mk2s moved warheads from Aldermaston on a monthly basis and normally passed London on the M25, took the M1A1 to Newcastle, then travelled either west to the A74 or north around Edinburgh with all warheads escorted through

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<sup>48</sup> In the US almost 600 arrest citations were also issued at a transmitter site for the American Trident system in Wisconsin since 1991, and people who have refused to co-operate with sentencing have served a combined total of more than 5 years in county jail. Interview with John LaForge, Nukewatch US (13/03/03)

the centre of Glasgow on the M8.<sup>49</sup> Such convoys were not infallible, and, controversially, there are several incidents where they experienced mechanical failures. To limit 'unscheduled stops', in mid-March 1994 the Ministry spent an estimated £60,000 modifying its fleet of transports to end a series of embarrassing series of roadside breakdowns.<sup>50</sup> As might be expected, these modifications were considered unsatisfactory by groups like Nukewatch UK.

This group, which monitored convoy movements throughout the country, worked with the likes of Faslane Peace Camp and Ploughshares on numerous occasions to disrupt the transport of these weapons.<sup>51</sup> Of the numerous Polaris or Trident transports, in September 1996 one convoy was interrupted five times by activists near a housing estate in Balloch while two activists cut security fencing and disabled a transport vehicle held at Cambridgeshire's RAF Wittering in November 1999 (Photograph 5.4).<sup>52</sup> Despite the fact that the Health and Safety Executive emphasised that such weapons must be transported in a way that complies with IAEA guidelines, the transportation of explosives alongside radioactive material was contrary to British

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<sup>49</sup> In July 1999 Doug Henderson, Armed Forces Minister, announced that responsibility for the routine movement of nuclear weapons within the UK was transferred from the RAF to the Ministry of Defence Police. SCND Ministry of Defence, Press Release: *Transfer of nuclear convoy responsibilities*, 15 July 1999; SCND, *The Safety of Trident*, p. 18.

<sup>50</sup> The first Trident convoy to suffer mechanical failure was on the M62 in July 1992, and by May 1993 another convoy was halted for four hours near the Erskine Bridge outside Glasgow. Information is freely available from the SCND website. These incidents also concerned SCND due to the events of 11 September 2001. *TG*, 17 March 1994, p. 6; Ainslie, *The Safety of Trident*, p. 18.

<sup>51</sup> Nukewatch UK was concerned with the complete elimination of these transports as well as the decommissioning of Trident. Interview with Jane Tallents (06/03/03). In 1982 Faslane Peace Camp accumulated just thirty-five arrests. By February 1997 the camp amassed well over 1,200 arrests ranging from offences involving the destruction of Ministry of Defence property to the disruption of warhead transports. *Faslane Peace Camp – list of actions*, <http://dSPACE.dial.pipex.com/cndscot/camp/arrests.htm> (02/03/03).

<sup>52</sup> Zelter, *Trident on Trial*, p. 52. Interruptions were numerous. In October 1996 activists were arrested in Balloch as they stopped a convoy that experienced mechanical failure. In November 1998 a convoy was stopped twice by activists as it passed through Rhu and at Whistlefield roundabout near Couplort.

**Photograph 5.4: TCHD Mk 2**



A blockage against lorries carrying Trident warheads to Scotland which took place outside Newcastle with protesters from Scotland (date unknown)

regulations due to an exemption clause for 'instruments of war'.<sup>53</sup> However, though the movement was unable to prevent the transport of these devices, it was successful in bringing international law to the forefront of the Trident debate.

Moral principles arguing against the act of deterrence were incorporated into the policies of the disarmament movement since the early 1960s, but in 1983 SCRAM also cited the standards of the Nuremberg Tribunal that ruled under international law against the 'planning, preparing, initiating, or waging a war of aggression'.<sup>54</sup> By 1984 the CND Annual Conference endorsed a motion that committed it to place greater emphasis on the legality question of nuclear weapons in the future.<sup>55</sup> This legal strategy, a tactic not exploited by the anti-Polaris campaign, reaped unexpected rewards for the anti-Trident movement. In July 1996 the ICJ declared that it could find no circumstances in which the threat or use of nuclear weapons would not violate humanitarian law.<sup>56</sup> Though this ruling was ultimately regarded as a symbolic gesture by the governments of nuclear-weapon states, the movement's interpretation of this verdict was in no way dismissive.

From 1996 the ICJ decision held incalculable leverage over the strategies of both the Christian peace movement and the disarmament movement, with Scottish law, somewhat inadvertently, inflicting manifest discomfort upon the Blair government. It

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*Nuclear Convoy stopped*, Available: [www.banthebomb.org/news961010.htm](http://www.banthebomb.org/news961010.htm). (01/07/02).

<sup>53</sup> SCND, *The Safety of Trident*, p. 23.

<sup>54</sup> During a discussion with Iain Leitch it was argued that lawful ownership of nuclear weapons was partially based on racially motivated guidelines. While nuclear-weapon states like the US, UK and Israel were free to possess such weapons free of harassment; India, North Korea and Pakistan were chastised for such development and consistently reminded of their futility. Furthermore, following Gulf War II activists argued that while UN inspectors could not find Iraqi weapons of mass destruction they could easily locate such items in the west of Scotland. Interview with Leitch (07/03/03); *GH*, 27 June 1983, p. 3.

<sup>55</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 145.

<sup>56</sup> Zelter, *Trident on Trial*, p. 41

is well documented that during a Ploughshares action in early June 1999 activists Angela Zelter, Anne Moxley and Ulla Roder boarded a Ministry of Defence barge, a floating laboratory that monitored various signals that active Trident submarines emitted, and destroyed property worth an estimated £80,000.<sup>57</sup> As activists sometimes do, they were arrested. However, taking some comfort from guidelines provided by international law, they remained incarcerated because they would only accept bail on the understanding that disarmament activity would not be considered to be a crime by the Scottish court. When the Greenock Sheriff Court trial commenced on 27 September 1999 a defence of necessity was pushed forward and argued that although the women had been wilful, they had not been malicious.<sup>58</sup> After a trial of twenty-four days the Defence managed to convince Sheriff Margaret Gimblett on 20 October 1999 that:

The three accused took the view that if it was illegal, and given the horrendous nature of nuclear weapons, that they had an obligation in terms of international law, never mind morally to do the little they could do to stop...the deployment and use of nuclear weapons in a situation which could be construed as a threat.<sup>59</sup>

For the first time in Britain's history the SSBN's legitimacy was officially questioned as Gimblett instructed the jury to acquit, thus validating the thirty-eight years of

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<sup>57</sup> This included magnetic, acoustic, thermal, radar and visual signals. Zelter, *Trident on Trial*, p. 54.

<sup>58</sup> The Procurator Fiscal charged that they (1) maliciously and wilfully damaged the vessel *Maytime*; (2) attempted to steal two inflatable life rafts; (3) maliciously and wilfully damaged equipment on board *Maytime*; and (4) maliciously and wilfully damaged equipment by depositing it 'in the waters of Loch Goil, whereby said items became waterlogged, useless and inoperable'. The Defence further offered five expert witnesses, including Professor Francis Boyle, University of Illinois, who testified that *Trident* could not be used in a lawful manner; Judge Ulf Panzer from Germany, who gave evidence of the legitimacy of non-violent action to uphold the law; Professor Paul Rogers, Bradford University, who discussed the capabilities of Trident; Professor Jack Boag, who gave evidence about the associated dangers of nuclear weapons; and Rebecca Johnston of ACRONYM, Geneva, who explained the consequences of the failure of successive UK governments to fulfil its obligations to the Non-Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NNPT). Each submitted that international law applied in Scotland, that the threat or use of nuclear weapons was found to be generally contrary to international law by the ICJ and that Trident was clearly interpreted as a threat.

<sup>59</sup> Zelter, *Trident on Trial*, p.69.

protest in both Scotland and throughout the international community. The British media, which became journalistically lethargic over disarmament actions at this point, suddenly exploded. Official responses from either NATO or the US government remained unclear. However, the verdict rattled the British political establishment as former Conservative minister, Lord Mackay of Ardbrecknish, proclaimed 'that pretty well anyone can walk into a nuclear installation related to Trident and do more or less what they want.'<sup>60</sup> One can only surmise as to the intensity of chatter that bounced between Downing Street and the White House. Forced to react, the Blair government set into motion a rare legal process in Scotland referred to as a Lord Advocate's Reference, which would later prevent other judges from providing similar acquittals.<sup>61</sup> Despite the obvious humiliation this verdict exacted, Labour's embarrassment also stemmed from the bygone relationship it established with the movement in years past.

According to naval historian Jim Ring, the CND had established a long running relationship with Labour as the party was 'well stocked with members of CND' who had from the beginning publicly 'opposed the Nassau agreement'.<sup>62</sup> While relationships between the disarmament movement and parties like the SNP, the Scottish Socialist Party and the Green Party were relatively straightforward, over the course of two decades the same could not be said for the rapport between Labour and CND. In 1987 Hillary Wainwright, freelance writer and researcher, explained that:

...one independent movement which has upset the Labour Party's equilibrium is the peace movement...The Labourist left, as well as right, have assumed Britain's role as a 'world leader' in all their international

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<sup>60</sup> *Nuclear Safeguards Bill*, Lords Hansard, Col. 779 Vol. 45, 30 November 1999.

<sup>61</sup> Zelter, *Trident on Trial*, p. 79.

<sup>62</sup> Labour CND, composed of party members and an organising executive that was Britain-wide, also had beginnings that dated back to the earliest days of Polaris. Interview with Taggart (08/02/03). Ring, *We Come Unseen*, p. 55.

campaigns. In the early years of CND (1957-63) they [Labour] presumed that this greatness could be deployed 'by example' to bring about world peace.<sup>63</sup>

In light of this commentary, by the early 1980s only a handful of Cabinet members had been former members of the CND with its influence on the party significant yet intermittent.<sup>64</sup> Chapter three has already explored the various reasons for Labour's transformation of policy and the slight complication that accompanied this.

Nonetheless, in an attempt to influence Labour's *Strategic Defence Review* the SCND submitted a list of five points to central government in June 1997 which argued that Scots rejected the utility of Trident. Labour's *White Paper* inevitably failed to meet the disarmament movement's expectations.<sup>65</sup> The movement was successful in pressurising the party in Scotland, but perhaps the Labour MP for Dundee East best explained their situation. John McAllion stated that, 'only British action can further the cause for scrapping Trident...unilateralist Scottish action could merely move it along the coast, never get rid of it'.<sup>66</sup> Labour's pragmatism did little to discourage the efforts of the movement.

### **Obstacles for the movement**

Besides overcoming the erratic nature of public support, the movement in Scotland was inevitably forced to confront substantial political opposition, media bias and a sagging economy if it hoped to incite the decommissioning of Trident. To its

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<sup>63</sup> Wainwright, *Labour: The Tale of Two Parties*, p. 81, 274.

<sup>64</sup> Foot, *Dr Strangelove*, p. 72; Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 147.

<sup>65</sup> SCND Ainslie, *Submission to the Strategic Defence Review from the Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, 27 June 1997. The Labour government began its Strategic Defence Review (SDR) in May of 1997 and was published on 8 July 1998. As declared in the Labour election manifesto it affirmed the Government's commitment to maintaining a nuclear deterrent but made a number of changes to it. Dodd and Oakes, *The Strategic Defence Review White Paper*, pp. 31-36.

detriment, it was also bound to compete with the anti-cruise movement. Thatcher has stated in her memoirs that the CND had begun to lose support from the 'high point' it reached in 1981, but that it remained 'dangerously strong'.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, because her government inherited its relationship with the movement it 'adopted the same strategy as its predecessors', ignored it when possible, and, 'when pressed, to dismiss its arguments as unrealistic and to concentrate on presenting the case for replacing Polaris with Trident'.<sup>68</sup> The behaviour of activists and local authorities from 1980-1985 encouraged the latter. In January 1983 central government employed its most extreme tactics when it appointed Michael Heseltine as Minister of Defence with a 'mission to counter CND influence', allowing for 'a well-funded anti-CND propaganda unit' to monitor its activities.<sup>69</sup> At that time the GLCM was drawing massive attention in England, with the government employing a well-funded national advertising campaign and establishing DS 19, a special unit which methodically depicted the CND as left-wing extremists prepared to jeopardise national security.<sup>70</sup> Due to Heseltine's aggressive initiatives, the CND cited incidents of mail tampering and telephone-tapping operations, which the Home Secretary would neither 'confirm nor deny'.<sup>71</sup> It soon pressed for a full inquiry, which never transpired, as the issue was overshadowed by Clive Ponting's supposed breaching of the Official Secrets Act, leaving CND vulnerable to further operations and allowing the government greater freedom in its attempts to influence public opinion.<sup>72</sup> Heseltine later claimed that the

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<sup>66</sup> John McAllion: *Nationalism and Identity*. Available: <http://www.sol.co.uk/j/jmcallion/cl.htm>. (01/07/02)

<sup>67</sup> Thatcher, *The Downing Street Years*, p. 267.

<sup>68</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 147.

<sup>69</sup> *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*. Available: [www.cnduk.org](http://www.cnduk.org). (02/07/02)

<sup>70</sup> Much of this was achieved through the media. Public Records Office, *Operational Selection Policy OSP11: Nuclear Weapons Policy 1967-1998*, Available: <http://www.pro.gov.uk/recordsmanagement/acquisition/osp11nuclear.htm>, (04/03/03).

<sup>71</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 149.

<sup>72</sup> Ponting was eventually acquitted. He had responsibility for 'the policy and political aspects of the operational activities of the Royal Navy' during the 1982 Falklands war. Ponting had the job of

defeat of CND was 'the proudest achievement of his political career'.<sup>73</sup> With the British public's attention generally focused on Greenham Common at that time, the anti-Trident movement was weakened considerably.

Although the true extent of surveillance by the Ministry of Defence before 1983 is unclear, it is certain that the movement's stationary sites in proximity to shore facilities were consistently monitored. Due to a history of concerns with the IRA and the later threat of radical Islam, the intensified monitoring of Coulport and Faslane was highly desirable. Yet in 1984 protest groups were considered a relatively new threat to the physical security of military establishments, with control of demonstrations outside these establishments deemed a matter for the civil police and the Ministry naturally alert to 'deliberate trespass'.<sup>74</sup> In April of that year Commodore David Morse reported to the Defence Committee at Faslane that activists were under a certain degree of surveillance and that, 'we do know who the regulars are but there are many regulars who come for two days and some stay for a week then the numbers build up and it is then for us at that time to build up our identification'.<sup>75</sup> Activities surrounding Rosyth Dockyard were also under regular observation. On 1 May 1984 the Defence Committee heard evidence from Chief Constable W. Moodie, Fife Constabulary, who explained that authorities 'maintained a low profile approach to

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drafting replies and answers on the sinking of the Argentinian warship *Belgrano* by the Royal Navy on 2nd May 1982. Because he believed that the Government misled the Commons, he sent documents to Tam Dalyell MP. The documents got to the Chairman of the select committee on Foreign Affairs, who, in turn, gave them back to the Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defence. Ponting was then prosecuted for breach of sec. 2(1)(a) of the Official Secrets Act. See C. Ponting, *The Right to Know. The inside story of the Belgrano affair* (London: Sphere Books) 1985.

<sup>73</sup> Foot, *Dr Strangelove*, p. 76.

<sup>74</sup> In 1984 the Defence Committee explained that 'protest groups currently account for the great majority of unauthorised incursions' and that 'authorities have had to meet the nuisance caused by their activities by a variety of countermeasures'. Second Report from the Defence Committee, *The Physical Security of Military Installations in the United Kingdom*, HC 397-II of Session 1983-1984, p. vii.

<sup>75</sup> Physical security fell into five broad categories that included 'innocent trespass, criminal entry, espionage, protest groups, terrorist attack/sabotage'. Second Report from the Defence Committee, *The*

this particular matter and...the activities of those people whilst they were located in the area were monitored'.<sup>76</sup> Though incomparable to the methods of DS 19, after Trident assumed the principal burden of providing deterrence, actions were augmented and the Ministry sustained its surveillance.<sup>77</sup> In the midst of maintaining itself from day to day, observations made by the Ministry were of little concern to the movement.

Throughout the economic depression of the 1980s employment opportunities afforded by the Trident, regardless of its inability to promote serious job growth, did nothing whatsoever to assist the disarmament movement.<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, a significant proportion of civilian employees at Trident facilities also interpreted the movement's position on the system as a clear threat to thousands of jobs in Scotland.<sup>79</sup> From 1980-1985, protest groups generally failed to address the financial implications of the system and there is little evidence to suggest that such a strategy was reasonably employed until sometime in the early 1990s. During the early 1980s, moral principles handed down from the Polaris era were eventually combined with the legality issue, but what of the £5,000 million question? The creation of a global network also provided for a complex though loosely co-ordinated form of activism in Scotland, but with overall unemployment standing at 14.8 per cent by 1987 its dialogue on Trident hardly inspired public sympathies. If protest organisations hoped to capitalise from

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*Physical Security of Military Installations in the United Kingdom*, HC 397-1 of Session 1983-1984, p. 43.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>77</sup> Faslane was the centre of controversy in 1984 when the words, 'Vermin, Vermin, Vermin' were supposedly used to signal the suspected intrusion of the base by Faslane Peace Campers. *HA*, 2 March 1984, p. 1; Statement on Defence Estimates 1996, Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Defence by Command of Her Majesty, *Chapter Four: The Defence Equipment Programme* (London: HMSO, May 1996).

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter One: Trident and the Strathclyde Region.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Purdie (02/06/03).

Scottish uneasiness with Trident, it first needed to present solid, workable employment alternatives.

According to Iain O. MacDonald, in 1981 two of Faslane's civilian employees expressed that 'a lot of men' wished that jobs offered near Helensburgh were 'other than for a nuclear military base'.<sup>80</sup> More recently Robert Purdie concurred with this assertion and explained that while many employees were comfortable with Trident, there were also a significant number who would have preferred another line of work.<sup>81</sup> In an attempt to meet the challenge of providing alternatives, the CND did choose Barrow-in-Furness, the construction site of the Vanguard class, as the location for its annual demonstration in 1984. By declaring itself as an advocate for conversion, both the CND and its Scottish equivalent emphasised that utilising skills and resources in nuclear weapons production should be geared towards new, socially useful production.<sup>82</sup> However, a credible list of alternative employment sources, including verifiable statistics and a rational time scale were not provided, and civilian employees gave little credence to a movement that potentially underestimated the Herculean task of formulating such a complex economic strategy. Should the Trident system be completely decommissioned or should it be relocated, and what type of comparable employment could take its place? Furthermore, in the event of relocation what would the cost be to British taxpayers in order to establish both new shore facilities and refurbished industrial complexes for prospective employers? Nevertheless, relocation was both a logistical nightmare and a matter for Westminster, and in the midst of the Cold War Scottish apprehensions would not be permitted to compromise national security. The questions pertaining to alternative employment

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<sup>80</sup> MacDonald, *Faslane Facts and Feelings*, p. 13.

<sup>81</sup> Interview with Purdie (02/06/03).

were boundless, and, at that time, the answers to these questions remained largely undetermined.<sup>83</sup> As late as 1994 the SCND still believed that decommissioning was capable of creating 55,000 direct and 19,000 indirect jobs through the STUC's *Emergency Jobs Package*, but because many Scots were aware of the Fife Region's experience, the movement's economic rationale largely failed to capture the imaginations of civilian employees.<sup>84</sup>

Throughout its history the disarmament movement also sought to utilise broadcast and print media to spread its message, but this convoluted relationship brought with it certain disadvantages. The Glasgow University Media Group examined television news coverage of CND demonstrations in 1985 and commented that opponents frequently depicted it 'as an emotional movement rather than a reasoned opposition containing people who are at best well meaning but naïve, and at worst subversives playing on the fears of the population'.<sup>85</sup> In many instances television appeared to disregard the principal reasons for protest and focused more on specific personalities. This attentiveness adopted a vicious tenor within the print media at times, occasionally propagating the harmful stereotypes of peace activists as social undesirables. In January 1998 Graham Stewart of *The Independent* reported that the son of a submariner 'was drawn into the CND in his mid-teens and indoctrinated by campaigners who used to give him cannabis'. The piece concluded by stating that 'he felt he was used then discarded by political protesters who were trying to target his

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<sup>82</sup> Byrne, *The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*, p. 147.

<sup>83</sup> Some of these questions have been answered yet so many remain. See Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*.

<sup>84</sup> *Trident in Scotland: Not Safe, Not Economic, Not Wanted*, p. 24. By this time Rosyth Royal Dockyard would be forced to seek an alternative source of employment. See Chapter Two: Trident and the Fife Region.

<sup>85</sup> Glasgow University Media Group, *War and Peace News* (Milton Keynes Philadelphia: OUP, 1985), p. 217.

father'.<sup>86</sup> This most unfavourable representation contradicted Byrne's portrayal of the CND's social composition, and John Ainslie, head administrator of SCND, further challenged this depiction as he was both a former member of the Intelligence Corps in Northern Ireland and a minister for the Church of Scotland.<sup>87</sup> Though numerous, positive examples of the movement's membership were readily available to the media, interests were often focused elsewhere and the damage caused by such portrayals proved immeasurable.

By this time Faslane Peace Camp lost Strathclyde Regional Council's backing, due to local government reorganisation, and this exposed the camp to increasing hostilities from Argyll and Bute Council.<sup>88</sup> According to one peace camper, 'when borders changed', the relationship with an 'anti-nuclear council' was replaced by 'the animosities of a pro-nuclear council'.<sup>89</sup> These comments proved accurate as Conservative councillor Billy Petrie argued that local residents wanted authorities to reclaim the property in April 1997, with the council intending to bulldoze the area (Photograph 5.5, 5.6).<sup>90</sup> Eviction papers were therefore delivered. However, the specialist section challenged the validity of this order as the lease in question, which gave activists and the previous council the right to exercise a one month termination clause, contained an unwritten agreement which dictated that activists could remain so long as nuclear weapons existed at Faslane. Campers also lived in mobile homes, a factor that ultimately granted them security of tenure under the Housing Scotland Act

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<sup>86</sup> *TI*, 5 January 1998, p. 5.

<sup>87</sup> Interview with Ainslie (25/03/03)

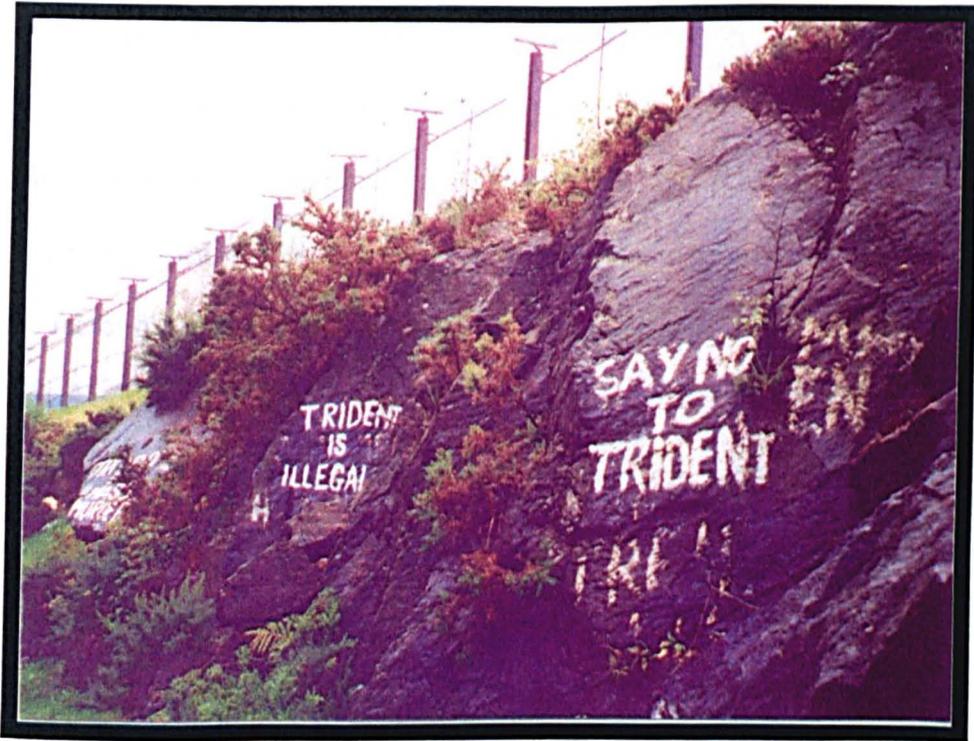
<sup>88</sup> As a result of the reorganisation of local governments in Scotland a single tier structure of thirty-two councils came into existence on 1 April 1996. NFLA Robert W. Black, 'Overview Report on the 1996/97 Audits of Local Authorities', *Accounts Commission for Scotland* (S.R. 99/3, 13 July 1999).

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Graham X, Faslane Peace Camp, (12/03/03).

**Photograph 5.5: Faslane Peace Camp 2000**



**Photograph 5.6: Artist unknown**



<sup>90</sup> TS, 25 April 1997, p. 3

1987.<sup>91</sup> It was these simple conditions that secured the future of the site as the eviction writ was ruled incompetent in April 1998, with the council's attempts to evict ending only in humiliation.<sup>92</sup> The implications of this case were infinitesimal to that of the October 1999 'Trident three' verdict, yet it serves to highlight the swarming legal challenges so many activists faced.<sup>93</sup>

Finally, while protest organisations experienced a noticeable resurgence in Scotland during the early 1980s, it lost considerable support in the south and was incapable of maintaining the public's interest due to the de-escalation of tensions brought about by the Cold War's thaw. As mentioned previously, the Thatcher government's decision of Trident over cruise quelled opposition to nuclear weapons in England. However, by 1985 England's relaxed state undermined Scottish opposition to Trident, and despite a revived presence north of the Border the movement experienced a massive reduction in terms of support from the wider UK. International developments also did nothing to assist. At the end of 1987 the final signing of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) removed the GLCM, Pershing missiles and Russian SS-20s from Eastern and Western Europe, 'with many in Scotland under the impression that Trident was included in this agreement'.<sup>94</sup> However, even if confusion was a credible factor it was the fall of communism in the early 1990s, along with the withdrawal of the US Polaris fleet from the Holy Loch in late 1991, that served as a dagger to the movement's heart. Lack of response to these historic events demonstrated the indifference most Scots held towards the Trident issue at this time. Such dramatic events allowed for public support to deteriorate within the confines of

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<sup>91</sup> *TS*, 2 April 1998, p. 4.

<sup>92</sup> *TS*, 7 April 1998, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Sere Chapter Four: Civil Society and Public Opinion.

<sup>94</sup> Isaacs and Downing, *The Cold War*, p. 368; Interview with Steven (04/03/03).

a more relaxed global community, leaving the movement, both foreign and domestic, stripped to its bare essentials. Though the physical presence of the Trident assisted the movement in refocusing its efforts in 1992, by 1999 neither the ICJ ruling, the Greenock trial or the late arrival of the fourth and final boat was capable of restoring the movement's former glory. Therefore, those who formed the backbone of protest groups in Scotland were forced to sustain themselves on a diet of sheer determination.

## **Conclusion**

Because all fixtures of the Trident system were firmly in place nearly a decade after the Cold War's completion it requires little effort to discount the achievements of the disarmament movement in Scotland. Both the government's decision to acquire the system, and the arrival of HMS *Vanguard*, failed to inspire mass rallies or monumental demonstrations as *Polaris* had some three decades earlier. However, one must note that the arrival of the US *Polaris* fleet met considerable opposition in Scotland because it was the first time many Scots experienced first-hand the extreme temperatures of the Cold War's world. Yet over the course of some forty years this sense of urgency was left to expire, with Scottish civil society generally disregarding the Trident as the public had grown accustomed to the presence of such weapons. In terms of protest the loss of British support after the cancellation of the GLCM can not be exaggerated as Scottish opposition to Trident, weakened by the loss of UK wide support, willingly subsided. This lack of resistance was also due in no small part to the rhetoric of Conservative MPs and local media which so frequently emphasised the promise of sustained employment. Therefore, because of Scotland's familiarisation with the SSBN the movement's ability to draw public support, despite countless

actions and blockades, greatly diminished. A barrage of information on the system, made through numerous disarmament publications, also fell short of achieving the movement's objectives. Ultimately, national security during a period of tension, safe operation of the system without incident, the Cold War's thaw and economic necessity only further eroded the potency of the movement. At this point, one must then question what the disarmament movement did in fact accomplish during this period.

For those of a sceptical nature the achievements of protest groups were generally overshadowed by their inadequacies and therefore much less obvious. However, the movement did not allow for Home Office publications, such as *Protect and Survive* and *Domestic Nuclear Shelters*, to convince ordinary civilians that nuclear war was a survivable option.<sup>95</sup> In 1982 Michael Dando, former lecturer in Peace Studies at the University of Bradford, described British civil defence policy as 'a disaster from the start...and will be of quite minimal value'.<sup>96</sup> Arguably, the government's publications attempted to provide a false sense of security and were possibly designed to undermine the efforts of these groups. Over the next fifteen years nothing changed in Britain's status as a nuclear-weapons state, but disarmament efforts continued. Though it could not convince Labour to decommission the system following the party's return to power in 1997, an immeasurable degree of pressure was exerted by the movement as it added an extra incentive for the Ministry of Defence to manage Trident's operations under the most stringent of safety guidelines. Because the SCND consistently monitored the system's activities, it served as self-appointed watchdog.

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<sup>95</sup> *Protect and Survive: an archive of civil defence materials*. Available: <http://www.cybertrn.demon.co.uk/atomic/> (10/10/03)

While it worked closely with the Christian peace movement, the disarmament movement's sustained presence in Scotland also prevented the issue from completely falling off the political map, both at home and abroad. Over a forty-year period numerous multinational groups like Ploughshares were inspired by the actions of their predecessors, thus, undertakings in Scotland served both as an inspiration and world-wide model for resistance. However, perhaps the most remarkable accomplishment of groups like SCND was far less ostentatious. With restricted access to economic and human resources, determination was the disarmament movement's greatest asset as it survived extended periods of decline. Their efforts continue to this day.

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<sup>96</sup> M. Dando, What would be the value of our civil defence in a nuclear war?, in M.R. Dando and B.R. Newman (eds), *Nuclear Deterrence: Implications and policy options for the 1980s* (Kent: Castle House Publications Ltd, 1982), p. 154.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion**

To this point we have uncovered the Scottish historical experience with Trident but there still remains the necessity of drawing together and analysing the various questions that have been explored. Three broad themes have been assembled to untangle the core arguments of this study from previous chapters, and each has been systematically categorised. We begin our analysis with an explanation of people's willingness to accept the view that Trident was required to ensure national security. Next, we examine the economic implications of Trident and acknowledge that central government potentially distorted the facts about its ability to strengthen the Scottish economy. Lastly, this chapter highlights other inconspicuous factors that assisted residents in disregarding the system's presence, a symptom largely sustained by exaggerated economics and enigmatic safety precautions. Ultimately, this conclusion defines the relationship between Scots and the national deterrent over the 1979-1999 period.

### **National security**

Whether it be a conventional or nuclear conflict, the mechanics of going to war required communication, appropriate response and time to bring individual member states of NATO on to a war footing; the importance of Scotland's collaboration in these matters was nothing less than imperative.<sup>1</sup> During the Cold War Scots generally understood that their homeland was riddled with immediate and major targets for Russian warheads, with the country committing itself to American, British and NATO

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<sup>1</sup> Miller, *The Cold War*, p. 319.

security planning. Though Scotland's dependency on the British state still inspired questions of sovereignty, Russian targeting of Scottish territory validated Trident and the issue did not, by itself, hold the potential to support an agenda that bolstered the need for Scottish Home Rule. However, advocates for disarmament continued to question the appropriateness of Scotland's contribution to the nuclear arms race.

Because Scots were familiar with Polaris, and lodged firmly between the vice of economic depression and tensions with the USSR up until the early 1990s, the UK's adoption of the Trident system alarmed relatively few north of the Border. Arguably, concerns with Polaris were allowed to dissipate sometime after the Americans occupied the Holy Loch, and before the installation of its British equivalent. There is no evidence of mass protest in Scotland associated with the Resolution class. Most in Scotland viewed the Polaris replacement as just that, with civil society generally unaware of the Vanguard's improved capabilities. Chapter Five has shown that those opposed to Trident remained focused on the results this system would have provided in the event of a nuclear exchange or some unforeseen accident. However, this was a distinct minority. Trident's advocates in Scotland also represented a lesser percentage of the population, but they asserted that the system was crucial for both employment and the defence of the West. Nevertheless, that which was not seen nor heard sparked little interest. Trident, like Polaris, was a stealthy system tucked away in the Clyde Estuary, and with Scots preoccupied by their economic situation this allowed a majority to disregard its presence.

From a political perspective, this thesis has argued that opposition to Trident in the 1980s was problematic, and after the Cold War it was viewed as irrelevant. Further

explanation is in order. For the British electorate economics generally take precedence over defence issues. At a British level, in the 1980s voters may have construed emphasis on the national deterrent by Trident's political opposition as an attempt to avoid the economic issue. Yet within a Scottish context, many regarded Thatcher and her economic policies 'with dislike, occasionally with loathing', but a credible number were receptive to the enhanced security or jobs that they believed Trident could provide.<sup>2</sup> For voters opposed to Trident and unwilling to accept Scotland's dependency on the unitary state, separation was an alternative. However, if an elector rejected Britain's nuclear defence strategy this did not imply that sovereignty was the preferred option, as rational thought, more often than not, dictated that it was preferable to retain Scotland's semi-autonomous status despite the SSBN's presence. It was this alternative that gathered the greatest level of support from the Scottish electorate. Finally, after 1991 Scottish demands for Trident's decommissioning, from a financial standpoint, would have been considered by some as nothing less than self-destructive given that Scots had already endured the worst of the Cold War.

After the 1991 fall of communism in Eastern Europe, issues like 'first strike' and 'hard target' were considered irrelevant, and the Trident issue was no longer important to the Scottish electorate. Yet, in terms of security, it was assumed that Trident still served a purpose. In January of that year hostilities in the Persian Gulf led to the invasion, and liberation, of Kuwait; the Americans left the Holy Loch in November and within weeks the lowering of the Soviet flag over the Kremlin symbolised a second Russian revolution as the Soviet Union fell. But with the passing of the communist

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<sup>2</sup> Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 165

superpower, it was Saddam Hussein's aggression towards its neighbour, including the use of chemical weapons against the Kurds in 1988, which tested the UK's defence posture against 'reality rather than hypothesis'.<sup>3</sup> The system's continuity was therefore seen as a reflection of the international community. Nevertheless, issues like devolution, the Poll Tax or the economy were of the highest priority in Scotland, and if Trident was decommissioned after the Cold War the British electorate would have considered this to be both a threat to national security and a monumental waste of the taxpayer's money. Britain's Trident would remain in Scotland.

Lastly, there was no experience of a nuclear accident with Trident, and the political potency of the SSBN in Scotland only continued with its downward spiral. Both the STUC's and NFLA's experiences verify this. In the future some unfortunate mishap on the Clyde could reverse this trend, but from 1979-1999 this assertion stands. With the promise of greater autonomy in Scotland fulfilled after 1997 and Trident left to roam in relative peace, the issue was effectively overpowered (**Photograph 6.1**).<sup>4</sup> In terms of security, each region had an obligation to the state. For Scotland, Trident was part of this responsibility but further analysis of the economic dimension reveals that the system left much to be desired

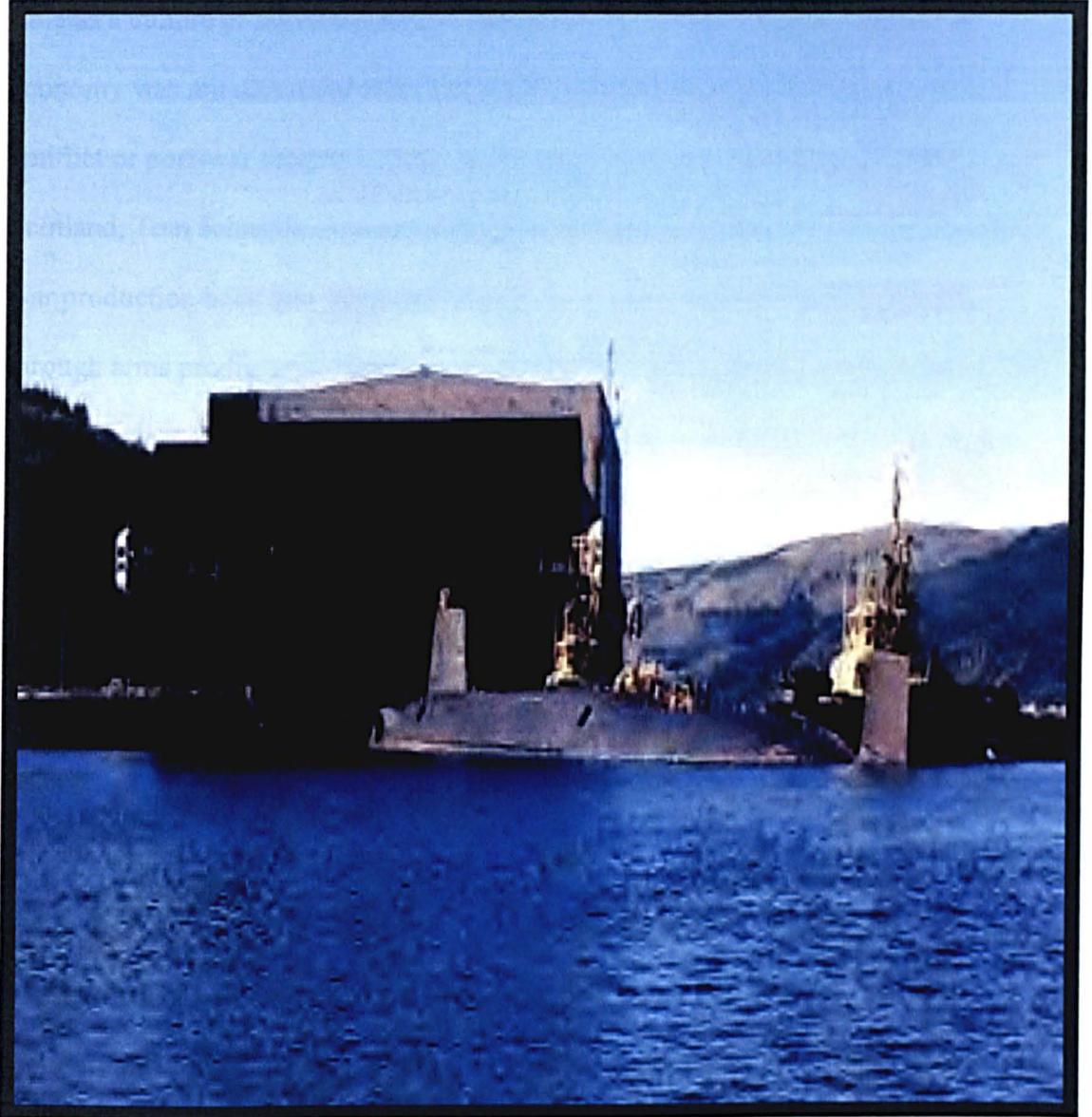
### **Economic necessity and employment**

This thesis has shown that Trident's contribution to the Scottish economy was over-rated by both central government and the Scottish electorate. The First World War

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<sup>3</sup> See S.K. Aburish, *Saddam Hussein: the politics of revenge* (London: Bloomsbury Press, 2000). See chapter three. R. Mottram, 'Options for Change: Process and Prospects', *RUSI Journal*, Spring 1991, pp 22-24; Third Report, *Options for Change: The Royal Navy*, paras 40 and 41, HC 266 of Session 1991-92.

**Photograph 6.1: HMS Vengeance arrives to Coulport, 1999**



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<sup>4</sup> This was according to Labour's Strategic Defence Review.

had brought with it a dependence on arms production, as global conflict provided for full employment in Scottish factories re-designed for war work. Yet despite the 'Red Clyde' phenomenon and the enhancement of 'workplace power and collective organisation', political scientist John Foster described Scottish civil society at that time as a culture of survival.<sup>5</sup> At the start of the Second World War the Scottish economy was not dissimilar from that which evolved during the previous years of conflict or post-war reconstruction. In the early 1940s the Secretary of State for Scotland, Tom Johnston, pressured the Churchill government into shifting significant war production back into Scotland.<sup>6</sup> Again the country's economy was bolstered through arms production. However, after 1945 Scottish dependency on defence took on the nuclear dimension and continued amidst tensions with the Soviet Union, but this transition implied little for heavy industry as Polaris and Trident SSBNs were built south of the Border. Though some conventional class boats were assembled in Scotland, submarine production brought little relief to the country as heavy industries were permitted to suffer a slow and painful death.

The drive to establish a means of support is not uniquely a Scottish characteristic in that there are countless examples of this throughout history. Yet in western society what is distinctly Scottish about this situation is the degree to which the Scottish economy relied on defence over the course of four decades. Spaven has argued that a majority of studies on the economic impact of bases suggested that 'for every 100 jobs (service personnel and directly-employed civilians) created at a base there are between twenty and sixty jobs indirectly generated in the local economy'. However,

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<sup>5</sup> For more on the 'Red Clyde' see J. Foster, *The Twentieth Century, 1914-1979* in R.A. Houston and W.W.J. Knox (eds.) *The New Penguin History of Scotland: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: Penguin Press, 2001), p. 426.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 453.

he has noted that a private export industry created twice as many jobs.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, at the end of the millennium the Scottish economy did not establish a reputation for adaptability. Despite the discovery of the first 'Scottish' oil field in 1970, the 'cruel accountancy of market forces' failed to either transform or prepare Scottish industry for oil production.<sup>8</sup> In 1913 some 100,000 were employed in the metal manufacturing sector but by 1980 the steel industry in Scotland began to contract, with the Ravenscraig plant extinguished in 1992 due to the rationalisation programme of a privatised British steel. In 1913 there were 400 collieries but by 1990 the Scottish miner was left with two. Between 1951-1991 the shipbuilding industry was purged of some 63,000 jobs.<sup>9</sup> In comparison, Trident's effect on the Scottish economy was marginal. In 1981 Polaris facilities in Scotland employed 8,400, and by 1999 Trident provided a meagre 3,300 jobs. Scottish historians have written extensively on Scotland's transition from heavy industry to the electronics and financial services sectors in the 1990s, but, serving as testimony to the SSBNs impact on the Scottish economy, none have incorporated either Polaris or Trident into their economic analysis. Their silence over the national deterrent speaks volumes.

There is a clear possibility that central government deliberately exaggerated Trident's economic potential in order to overwhelm its controversy in Scotland. In the midst of the Cold War and a struggling economy it was this ingenious strategy that nurtured tolerance, rather than hostility, between the thousands of civilian employees and Trident's adversaries. This arrangement ultimately served to pressurise Scottish civil society, but it was skilfully employed so as not to divide communities, ultimately

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<sup>7</sup> Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Payne, *The Economy*, pp. 29-31.

<sup>9</sup> In 1913 twenty of those collieries were large producers. Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes*, p. 4.

contributing to a loose form of social cohesiveness. However, in its attempts to convince Scots of Trident's economic significance central government and Conservative Members of Parliament consistently failed to mention the system's higher standard of efficiency to that of Polaris. They were therefore culpable of overemphasising the system's true economic impact. So effective was this technique that, for many, Trident was idealised; prompting few to question the system's capacity for future job reductions.<sup>10</sup>

It was the Scots time-tested propensity for acclimatisation that allowed for their rather relaxed degree of familiarisation with Polaris and Trident. Whether their ability to 'buckle on one's armour' has always served them favourably over the centuries is open to conjecture, and Scotland's imperial past, inevitably tied to economic interests, was likely to be an influential factor over Scotland's relationship with the deterrent. If we consider nuclear weapons against this background, the analysis of historian Linda Colley may be of assistance.

When discussing Scottish participation in the empire Colley stated that investment in the British imperium enabled Scots to feel themselves 'peers of the English in a way still denied them in an island kingdom'.<sup>11</sup> There has long been a tradition in Scotland of providing recruits for the UK's armed forces with Spaven describing this as 'predominantly lower ranks of the "poor bloody infantry"'.<sup>12</sup> Due to the consistent level of high unemployment in Scotland and concentrated recruiting drives in specific areas, the Scottish contribution of military personnel per head of population was,

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<sup>10</sup> In terms of technological advancement, submarine reactor refuelling had taken mammoth steps forward. The Astute class, to be stationed at Faslane, would not require refuelling throughout their anticipated lifetime of up to thirty years. Van Der Vat, *Standard of Power*, p. 418.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 136.

again according to Spaven, 'likely to be higher than the UK average'.<sup>13</sup> However, Scots have also gone on to establish themselves as important figures within the military establishment, particularly the Royal Navy. When Highlander Hugh Mackenzie was appointed Chief Executive for the Polaris Programme it made him one of the most important submariners in British history.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, in an age without empire, could maintaining the SSBN in Scotland, coinciding with other military and political contributions, be but one way of bringing that sentiment home? Though a distinct possibility, this question remains to be answered.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union it is certain that lasting economic interests were still key in Trident's ability to remain in Scotland undisturbed.<sup>15</sup> Puerto Rico's experience with the US Navy is a useful comparison that might best demonstrate the veracity of this statement. For years there had been intense opposition to the American bombing range at Roosevelt Roads Naval Station on Vieques, and when the US Navy closed the facility in July 2003 the island lost the \$250 million injected annually into its economy and the civilian jobs it provided. The opposition was successful, but whether residents of Vieques lived to appreciate their victory over their former American employer remains to be seen. When questioned about the impact of the US Navy's decision to the Puerto Rican economy, Senator James M. Inhofe, Oklahoma Republican and member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, coldly stated, 'that's their problem, the time for them to be concerned about that was when they were kicking us off our range.'<sup>16</sup> Rosyth's former employees have already undergone what the Puerto Ricans are currently experiencing, but one can only

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<sup>12</sup> Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> Spaven, *Fortress Scotland*, p. 3.

<sup>14</sup> Van Der Vat, *Standard of Power*, p. 359.

<sup>15</sup> Chemical and biological weapons were still a concern after the Cold War.

imagine as to whether Fife residents long for the days of refitting British SSBNs or prefer its absence.

Health researcher Maggie Mort has described civilian employees opposed to nuclear weapons as 'economic conscripts' in the Trident project, and because the defence industry was vulnerable to a number of external influences Scottish workers were inevitably forced to accept that which was dealt to them.<sup>17</sup> In September 2003 the Public Accounts Committee announced that Trident's relocation from Rosyth to Devonport cost £300 million more than originally projected, ultimately discrediting Rifkind's 1993 analysis.<sup>18</sup> Poor management was but one possibility that underlined the hazards of such dependency, with the Dockyard smothered under the weight of faulty judgement. Preferring to maintain an optimistic view, the Blair government continued to argue that hosting Trident still had its benefits

### **Public indifference to Trident**

Without question, less obvious factors bolstered Scottish cooperation with the national deterrent. During the Cold War British possession of a credible system eased public concerns with American strategic objectives. Yet when we attempt to delineate the Scottish historical experience with Trident from within the context of the Union, it is also increasingly apparent that, along with operational suitability, interests in self-preservation held implications for where the system should be situated. Those in England, Northern Ireland and Wales were all too prepared to accept the services of

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<sup>16</sup> *The Washington Times*, 20 July 2003, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Mort, *Building the Trident Network*, p. 114.

<sup>18</sup> Thirty seventh Report from the Committee of Public Account, *Ministry of Defence: The construction of nuclear submarine facilities at Devonport*, HC636 of Session 2002-2003.

a replacement system for the outdated Resolution class Polaris fleet, so long as it took residence outside their own geographical boundaries. Following Thatcher's decision to acquire Trident, this assertion becomes evident as mass protest over the GLCM at Greenham Common did not represent a commitment by the British public to the removal of Trident from Faslane. While the abandonment of cruise missiles brought a collective sigh of relief for those in England, protest in Scotland was subdued as the system was to be established in what many may have considered to be a remote location. Furthermore, this perception appears to have been shared amongst a considerable number in Scotland. To this day the Ministry of Defence has done little to dispel this false perception as idealised photography still presents the SSBN against a background devoid of Scottish communities.<sup>19</sup> This study has served to discourage any understandable misconceptions.

Sporadic emphasis on public safety and the environment by both the Ministry of Defence and the Royal Navy was successful in containing opposition to Trident, thus easing tensions in Scotland. Since its arrival there is little room for doubt that the safe operation of the SSBN has been, at considerable cost to the taxpayer, held to the highest of standards. Nevertheless, Chalmers and Walker have suggested that, 'Whether public antagonism to nuclear weapons in Scotland is as great as activists claim is open to question.'<sup>20</sup> This statement in itself verified the uncertainty surrounding the state of opposition. Mort has also stated that Trident 'does not seem to have been a major issue' for the US public, with the UK, and Scotland in particular, apparently following the American trend.<sup>21</sup> Accidents involving submarines were inevitable, but because there were no incidents with Trident in Scotland, controversy

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<sup>19</sup> The cover photo is but one of numerous examples of idealised photography.

<sup>20</sup> Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Waters*, p. 42.

remained contained. However, considering that a handful of activists have successfully boarded parked submarines at Faslane, after September 11 2001 it is no longer inconceivable that a car bomb or modified speedboat could damage either a nuclear convoy en route to Coulport or a nuclear vessel moored on the Gareloch (Photograph 6.2).

The notion that Trident was a remarkable technological achievement is indisputable, but both the applicability and utility of nuclear weapons has been subject to fervent criticism since the first usage of radiation bombs on Japan. Despite concerns with WMD at the time of writing this thesis, and the attempts of 'rogue nations' to establish nuclear, biological and chemical capabilities, it remains uncertain as to whether this will assist Trident's opponents in Scotland. When some who assisted in designing the US Trident system's re-entry body described it as 'a symptom of a deeper sickness in our society', the project's value is called into question.<sup>22</sup>

Nonetheless, when considering the Scottish historical experience with Trident it is apparent that the majority made no public declarations whatsoever. This study has clearly demonstrated that over a relatively short period, Scots came to disregard the issue in return for significant employment, and that Trident sustained little political value so long as it was maintained safely. With the system left to frequent Scottish waters and its warheads free to travel various motorways, it appears that the efforts of those who once marched to the Holy Loch in defiance had been long forgotten. That being said, in 1999 there was little question that the probability of ridding Scotland of Trident, and future versions of the SSBN, was anything but likely.

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<sup>21</sup> Mort, *Building the Trident Network*, p. 4.

**Photograph 6.2: Activist welcomes HMS Vengeance to Scotland, 1999**



<sup>22</sup> This was a comment from Bob Aldridge, who worked on the Polaris, Poseidon and Trident systems and has since criticised his work. 'Focus on Trident', *Red Pepper* (2004), p. 6.

## Chronology: The SSBN in Scotland

March 1960	Macmillan allows the US Navy's use of the Holy Loch as a forward-operating base for the Polaris deterrent.
March - May 1961	SCND assembles action against US presence at the Holy Loch.
October 1962	Cuban Missile Crisis.
April 1963	Polaris Sales Agreement concluded between US and UK governments. The Admiralty Polaris Committee also agrees that Rosyth should refit the new sea-based deterrent as well as other SSNs.
May 1963	Work to accommodate the UK's Polaris programme at Faslane begins, government places orders for Polaris boats.
September 1966	The first of the Resolution class Polaris boats, HMS <i>Resolution</i> , is launched.
June 1968	HMS <i>Resolution</i> undergoes first patrol from Faslane
September 1968	HMS <i>Repulse</i> commissioned.
November 1968	HMS <i>Renown</i> commissioned.
December 1969	HMS <i>Revenge</i> commissioned.
May 1972	Nixon and Brezhnev sign the first Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty.
August 1975	Ford and Brezhnev sign the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe between the US and USSR.
March 1976	Soviets deploy SS-20 missiles in Eastern Europe
January 1979	Callaghan and Carter reach agreement over Trident
March 1979	Scottish devolution referendum fails to pass with 40 per cent approval.
May 1979	Conservatives under Margaret Thatcher replace Labour government with forty-three seat majority.
July 1980	The GLCM is considered but decision to procure Trident I announced by Thatcher government.
November 1980	Manchester City Council joins NFLA, Glasgow and Edinburgh follow soon after.
March 1981	Labour splits, 'Gang of four' set to establish the SDP.
June 1981	First NOPD for Trident Works Programme released.
March 1982	Decision to procure Trident II announced by Thatcher government; Catholic Church condemns Trident; Argentineans invade the Falklands.
June 1982	Faslane Peace Camp established outside submarine base
September 1982	Missile fitting and servicing for Trident transferred to US facility.
January 1983	DS 19 established to counter CND influence.
May 1983	Strathclyde Regional Council's Coulport Inquiry released.
June 1983	Conservatives win general election with 144 seat majority.
May 1984	Dumbarton District Council joins NFLA; revised NOPD released.

## Chronology: The SSBN in Scotland

- March 1985 Secretary of State for Scotland, George Younger, approves Trident Works Programme.
- May 1985 Asbestos discovered at Faslane; AESG releases first study on Trident.
- May 1986 NOPD released for Rosyth Royal Dockyard.
- June 1987 Conservatives win general election with 101 seat majority, but their Scottish seats plummet from twenty-one to ten.
- March 1988 Liberal Democrat Party established; AESG release second study on Trident.
- May 1989 Kinnock and Labour reject disarmament
- October 1989 NFLA release *Civil Defence Planning Assumptions in Central Scotland*.
- November 1989 Border between East and West Germany opened.
- January 1990 Widening of Rhu Narrows begins.
- November 1990 Thatcher ejected after poll tax riots; John Major is PM.
- December 1990 Major confirms dedication to project when he states states, 'We must have Trident'; Drell Commission warns of accidental explosion with Trident SLBM during flight.
- November 1991 US Polaris fleet withdrawn from the Holy Loch.
- December 1991 Soviet Union collapses.
- April 1992 Conservatives win general election with twenty-one seat majority.
- September 1992 Major government announces competition for refits
- October 1992 HMS *Vanguard* arrives at Faslane.
- June 1993 Rosyth stripped of Trident refits.
- August 1993 Faslane opened for Trident; HMS *Vanguard* commissioned.
- May 1994 HMS *Victorious* arrives at Faslane.
- January 1995 HMS *Victorious* commissioned.
- October 1995 Blair convinces trade unions to reject disarmament.
- March 1996 HMS *Vigilant* arrives at Faslane.
- July 1996 ICJ Advisory Opinion rules the threat or use of nuclear weapons violated humanitarian law.
- December 1996 HMS *Vigilant* commissioned.
- May 1997 Labour government returns under Blair with 177 seat majority.
- September 1997 Scottish devolution referendum passed.
- November 1997 Royal Assent given to Scotland Act 1997.
- May 1998 Declaration of Faslane released.
- July 1998 Strategic Defence Review confirms Labour's dedication to Trident.
- May 1999 HMS *Vengeance* arrives at Faslane; Labour secures majority in Scottish Parliament. Scottish Parliament reconvened.
- September 1999 HMS *Vengeance* commissioned.
- October 1999 'Trident three' acquitted.

## Appendix A: Scottish local government

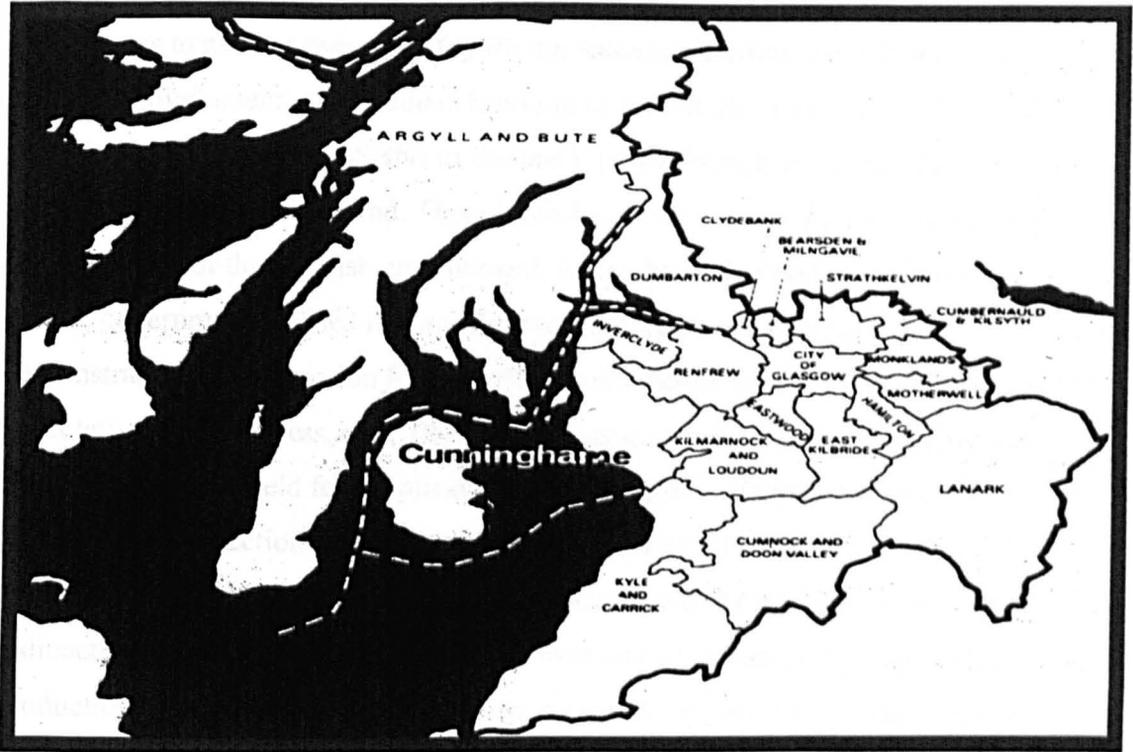
It is necessary to provide clarification over the arrangement of Scotland's local government as references to the Strathclyde and Fife Regions are likely to confuse the uninitiated reader. Prior to 1974 Scotland was divided into thirty-three county councils and 201 town councils, including the four cities of Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow. City Corporations governed larger cities. However, local government underwent reorganisation under Labour in 1974-75, and there was a move to establish three unitary Island Councils and nine Regional Councils, broken down into fifty-three District Councils. Regional Councils controlled larger populations and involved extensive geographical boundaries. These changes created a more cohesive identity for the various regions but it also empowered local authorities in that it allowed them to be more confrontational on various issues. During the procurement stage of Trident this allowed for greater tension between the two levels of government. After the completion of shore facilities both Strathclyde and Fife ceased to exist following the reorganisation of 1996. Post-1996 a single-tier structure allowed for twenty-nine unitary authorities with the three island councils remaining.<sup>1</sup> See maps on the following page.

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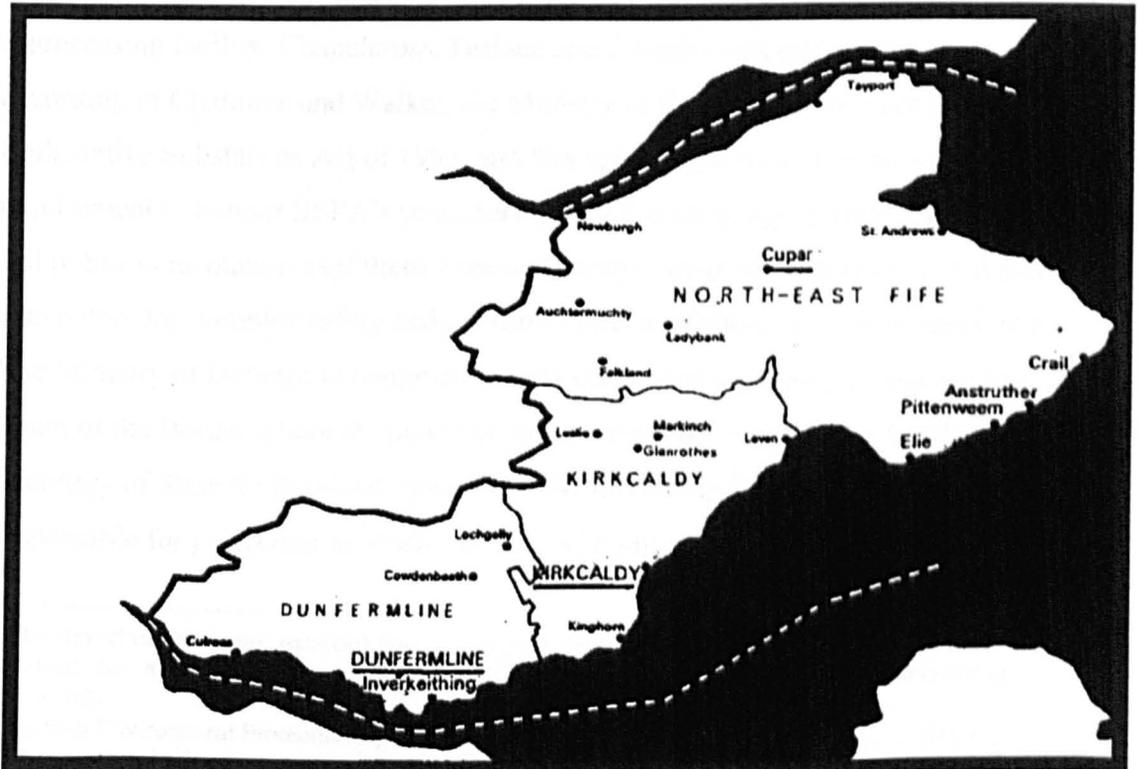
<sup>1</sup>See Central Office of Information, *Scotland*, (London: HMSO, 1974) p. 13; Iain G.C. Hutchison, 'Government' in T.M. Devine and R.J. Finlay (eds.) *Scotland in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 1996), p. 60; I. Maver, *Glasgow*, (Edinburgh: EUP, 2000), p. 216-217; and *Whitaker's Scottish Almanac* (London: A&C Black, 2003), p. 79.

Appendix A (cont.)

The Strathclyde Region



The Fife Region



## **Appendix B: Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)**

SEPA was established by the Major government under the Environment Act 1995 as Trident was to assume responsibility for the national deterrent the following year. After the government's unfortunate handling of Rosyth Dockyard in 1993 and the arrival of Vanguard class SSBNs to Faslane it probably supported any efforts to repair its tarnished image in Scotland. Though the Agency's primary function was to ensure the protection of the Scottish environment, it may have also been the case where central government realised that an additional safety champion might have demonstrated its appreciation for Scottish apprehensions with Trident. This is purely speculative. Nevertheless, after 1997 the Labour government's delivery of greater Scottish autonomy held few implications for the Agency. SEPA was sponsored by the Environment Protection Unit in the Scottish Executive's Environment and Rural Affairs Department, and was responsible for issues such as the keeping and use of radioactive substances; protection of the public and environment by minimalising production of radioactive waste; and ensuring that doses of all man-made sources of radioactivity in food and the environment remained below one millisievert per year.<sup>2</sup> Amongst a number of responsibilities, the Environmental Monitoring Programme specifically focused on discharges from Dounreay nuclear research and fuel reprocessing facility, Chapelcross, Faslane and Rosyth Dockyard.<sup>3</sup> However, according to Chalmers and Walker, the Ministry of Defence was exempt under the Radioactive Substances Act of 1993, and this implied that there was no statutory requirement to honour SEPA's procedures; with discharge agreements subjected to full public consultation as if there were no Crown exemption. Chalmers and Walker also noted that complex safety and environmental regulations were to be handled by 'the Ministry of Defence in conjunction with safety and regulatory bodies located South of the Border where the main competences reside; and that 'the London-based Secretary of State for Scotland, rather than the Edinburgh-based First Minister', was responsible for protecting Scottish interests with safety.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The sievert relates to the absorbed dose in human tissue to the effective biological damage of the radiation. See *Radiation Reassessed*. Available: [http://whyfiles.org/020radiation/fact\\_sheet.html](http://whyfiles.org/020radiation/fact_sheet.html). (09/03/02).

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Environment Protection Agency. *Environmental Radioactivity in Scotland* (2001). p.2.

<sup>4</sup> 'Civilianising' of regulatory activity also involved work carried out by the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NII) as well as SEPA. See Malcolm Chalmers and William Walker. *Uncharted Waters.*, p.57.

## Appendix C: The Clyde Offsite Safety Plan

Dumbarton District Council participated in the pre-planning of the Scheme and would have supervised its execution should it have ever become necessary. From 1999 Argyll and Bute Council had responsibility for co-ordinating the preparations of the Clyde Offsite Safety Plan and for managing consultations with the public. These preparations replaced the former Clyde Area Public Safety Scheme. A Local Liaison Committee was to co-ordinate, manage and liaise with local emergency services.<sup>5</sup> A correspondence with Eleanor Steel of Argyll and Bute Council revealed that after 1999, 'in order to look at the plan afresh, a multi-agency group was brought together to ensure that the plan fulfilled all the requirements of civilian agencies'. However, it should be acknowledged that this plan was designed to response to accidents involving submarine reactor but there were no proposals for a weapon accident.<sup>6</sup> Neither the Safety Scheme nor the Offsite Plan were ever enacted.

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<sup>5</sup> *Report of Inquiry into the proposed extension of the Royal Naval Armaments Depot at Coulport*. 9 September 1983, p. 40; The Local Liaison Committee was established during the Polaris era. Chalmers and Walker, *Uncharted Water*, p. 169.

<sup>6</sup> Correspondence with Eleanor Steel, Argyll and Bute Council, (06/07/02).

## Appendix D: Ding Dong Dollar<sup>7</sup>

Chorus:

Oh ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid  
No ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid  
Singing, Ding Dong Dollar, everybody holler  
Ye cannae spend a dollar when ye're deid

O the Yanks have just drapped anchor aff Dunoon  
And they've had a civic welcome frae the toon  
As they came up the measured mile  
Bonnie Mary o' Argyle  
Was wearing spangled drawers ablow her goon

And the publicans will a' be daein' swell  
For it's jist the thing that's sure tae ring the bell  
Aye the dollars they will jingle  
There'll be no a lassie single  
Even though they'll maybe blow us a' tae hell

And the Clyde is sure tae prosper now they're here  
Because they're chargin' one and tenpence for the beer  
Ay, an' if you want a taxi  
They stick it up your - jersey  
An' they charge you thirty bob tae Sandbank Pier

But the Glesca Moderator disnae mind  
In fact he thinks the Yanks are awfy kind  
'Cause if it's Heaven that ye're goin'  
It's a quicker way than rowin'  
And there's sure tae be naebody left behind

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<sup>7</sup> Words by Trad, Thurso Berwick, J. Mack and Jim Mclean. Also visit the Scottish Centre for Political Song at Glasgow Caledonian University.

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