

Lines to Take on Attacks by Professor David Ball

- David Ball is a Professor of Risk Management and co-Director of Centre for Decision Analysis & Risk Management at Middlesex University. He is not an expert in nuclear science or the management of nuclear waste, although he does have a DPhil in Physics.
- He has not attended a meeting of CoRWM since December 2004, having “voluntarily suspended himself”, so he has not been party to any recent discussions about security. This is despite the fact that he could have chosen to attend any of our meetings as an ordinary member of the public, as many have already done, visited our website or read any of our papers which are posted to our website.
- There seems to be some confusion behind his comments as to CoRWM’s remit. CoRWM has no say and no remit regarding the security of existing nuclear installations and storage facilities, which are instead overseen by the Office for Civil Nuclear Security. This misunderstanding – deliberate or otherwise – is at the root of many of his accusations.
- It is categorically wrong for him to claim that the Committee is ignoring issues of security. Protecting *future* nuclear waste from terrorism or sabotage has been a key issue for CoRWM ever since its establishment in 2003, and has been discussed at length at meetings with the public and local authorities. (Gordon MacKerron never said that terrorism was not an issue for the Committee, as Prof Ball has often claimed.)
- The allegation that we are tackling these issues in an “amateurish fashion” is patently absurd. We have already commissioned substantial research from specialists in this field. We have recruited a panel of expert scientists and regulators - including the Office for Civil Nuclear Security - specifically to assess how each of the options for dealing with waste provides protection against security threats.
- CoRWM has nearly a year to go before making its recommendations to government. It is hard to see how it can have yet 'failed' to do something which is anyway outside our remit in so far as current facilities are concerned, is on the published list of core criteria we are considering for future options and on which we have set up an expert panel of scientists and regulators to advise.