

HMS Triumph

"The House will be aware that the United Kingdom hunter-killer submarine fleet was recalled recently for checks to be made on their reactor systems to determine whether they had the same defect as HMS Tireless. I can now update the House on the present position.

The inspections have shown that there is no evidence of the problem in five submarines. Although four of them were already alongside undergoing repair, maintenance or refit, this means that HMS Triumph, which has the capability to launch Tomahawk missiles, will return to operational duties very shortly.

Analysis of more detailed inspections will allow a recovery programme to be set in place for those submarines that are affected. We aim to have that established by the end of November. In the short term, HMS Triumph's availability means that we are much better placed to conduct operations, including those in support of the deterrent.

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There is a programme of inspections. The reason why we were so determined that the inspections should take place as quickly as possible was concern that there was a generic design fault in the construction of the reactor. That appears not to be the case. In five of the boats we have not been able to find that particular problem. One of them will be very shortly available for deployment. We are continuing with more detailed inspections of the remaining vessels and I will certainly bring the House up to date as and when I have more specific information available."

(Geoff Hoon, Hansard 1 Nov 2000, Defence and Armed Forces Debate, col 724-725)

A press release issued on 1 Nov 2000 by the MoD refers to the above statement and includes a note with the following list:

"Notes for editors:

1. The status of UK SSNs is as follows:

HMS Sovereign - Faslane for maintenance - clear of flaw
HMS Sceptre - Refit in Rosyth - clear of flaw
HMS Spartan - Refit in Rosyth - clear of flaw
HMS Triumph - Devonport - clear of flaw

HMS Superb - Faslane for maintenance - signs of flaw
HMS Splendid - Faslane - signs of flaw
HMS Trafalgar - Devonport - signs of flaw
HMS Turbulent - Devonport - signs of flaw
HMS Torbay - Refit in Devonport - signs of flaw
HMS Talent - Devonport for maintenance - signs of flaw
HMS Tireless - Gibraltar - defect under repair"