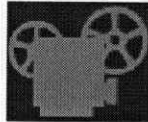


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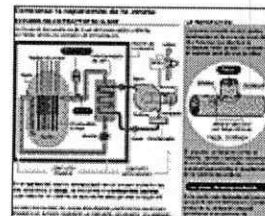
British Navy will begin the repair of the 'Tireless' in January after trying it in another submarine

I itched says in the Congress that to transfer the submersible is more dangerous than to fix it in Gibraltar

Jorge To Rodriguez, Madrid

British Real Navy will try the repair of the nuclear submarine *Tireless*, damaged in Gibraltar from the 19 of May, in another one of the retired of the circulation and beached submersibles in its base of Devonport. The minister of Outer Subjects, Josep I itched, assured yesterday in the Congress that the repair of the submersible in the Rock does not involve risk some for the population of the zone. " If we thought that there is risk we would demand the transfer of the submarine ", it said. The adjustment " itself " of *the Tireless* and the " tests of operation " will begin at the end of January.

I itched, in its exclusive appearance on *the Tireless* in the Commission of Exteriors, wanted from the beginning to clear the doubts on the risks of the repair of the submersible in Gibraltar. " All the data allow the Government to ratify themselves in which some for the population of the zone is reasons for alarm nor no risk ", it riveted I itched, before sentencing: " If we thought that it exists risk for the population we would formally demand the retirement of the submarine and if sometimes we had believed it, we would already have requested it ".



It begins repair of the failure

I itched it added that Spain does not have capacity to influence in the

decisions of the British Government its military base of Gibraltar nor which must become in the submarine, although needed that Spain keeps with the United Kingdom, like country " friend and ally ", relations of mutual confidence. " If by the treaty of Utrecht we had not yielded the sovereignty on Gibraltar, territory whose retrocesión to Spain is, of course, a cannot be waived objective, today we would not have to the Tireless berthed in its port ", said.

I Itched, who recognized that to the Government " it does not like this situation ", explained of what the failure of the primary circuit of refrigeration of the nuclear reactor consists: " It consists of two cracks in the zone of union of two pipes of the circuit of refrigeration, affecting not only to the weld between both, as initially one assumed, but also jeopardizing to the material base of one of them ".

The damaged pipe already has been cut and taken to the United Kingdom to know " the origin last the failure ". The crack, added, it has taken place by thermal fatigue of the material of the pipe due to " a defect of design in the characteristics of mechanization and the temperatures stress that take place in that zone during the normal operation of the reactor ".

The repair no longer is a simple weld, but that it requires the manufacture of a special piece to replace the damaged zone. The piece, call *sweepolet*, never has been used in nuclear submarines but in British electrical power stations, like the one of Sizewell.

" Before using the connection piece, of commercial manufacture, it will be necessary to verify that it fulfills the quality requirements necessary ", it added. The piece, once installed and before taking the reactor, will be proven by means of " x-rays and ultrasounds " and with a test of pressure to verify that the pipe holds without flights.

I Itched said that the British authorities have indicated that " more likely tests are made, before initiating the repair of *the Tireless*, in another one of the submarines that are beached in the base of Devonport, in the United Kingdom ". It will be in one of the six submersibles retired as a result of the failure of *the Tireless*.

The adjustment, now stopped, will be reinitiated when she is proven the new piece, " at the end of January ". " It will be then when the works of repair begin later themselves and the operation tests ", it added I Itched. The minister discarded the three systems to transfer the submarine to the United Kingdom, because, said, anyone of them " yes would tolerate mayores risks " to the repair in the Rock. *The Tireless* will not even leave Gibraltar, like soon, March of 2001.

The explanations did not convince to the opposition, that it was sorry that the minister requested the complicity of the Parliament to demand to the United Kingdom the transfer of *the Tireless*. They even reproached the Spanish Government who had assumed the role of the Briton in the demonstration of which there are no problems and of which the safest option is the repair in Gibraltar.

The socialist deputy Manuel Marín even assured that Spain could have prevented the entrance of the submersible in Gibraltar. " It would be necessary to have acted before, with the legislation on marine security in the hand, when the submarine passed through Spanish waters course to the Rock, with government problems, because it went to three knots of speed with an auxiliary motor ", Marín said, that added that *the Tireless* took four days in crossing the 400 miles that are between Cabo de Palos (Murcia) and End Sheep (Algeciras), " after Malta, Italy, NATO and the Pentagon did not leave saturated in their bases ".

Marín, surprised so that the Government did not facilitate the defeat of the boat, suggested two hypotheses when finishing the appearance: that the submarine *had been strained* in Gibraltar, or that Spain had allowed its entrance knowing the failure.



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