

HMS Tireless, Gibraltar and nuclear submarine problems

- May 12 Reactor accident on HMS Tireless between Sicily and North Africa. Later coolant water was discharged into the Mediterranean.
- May 19 Tireless arrives in Gibraltar. The MoD said she would only be there a short time, to ensure she was in shape to return to Britain for repairs, under tow if necessary.
- June 23 MoD announce that Tireless will be repaired in Gibraltar. Strong opposition to this from a wide cross section in Gibraltar and neighbouring areas of Spain.
- July 13 2,000 people take part in demonstrations against HMS Tireless in Gibraltar and La Linea.
- Aug 3 Gibraltar Government appoints a panel of experts to advise them.
- Aug 10 Locals in Gibraltar consider legal action to stop the repair.
- Aug 17 Gibraltar Government opposes the repair because the MoD refuses to supply their experts with information. Start to repair is postponed.
- Aug 21 Poll shows 80 % of resident of Gibraltar oppose repair.
- Aug Spanish papers publish copies of a Royal Navy letter which says a submarine with a leaking reactor would never be allowed into the Z berth at Southampton, far less repaired in a Z berth.
- Sep 3 Transshelf, which could transport a submarine, visits Gibraltar.
- Sep 9 Faslane based submarines HMS Sovereign and Superb withdrawn from service because of reassessment of a reactor fault on HMS Sceptre. Sceptre is kept in Rosyth although its refit has ended.
- Sep 12 Protests against Tireless during Gibraltar national day rally.
- Sep 14 Gibraltar Government drops its opposition to the repair following a report from its panel of experts. Report is based on a 2 mm crack.
- Sep 15 Repair work starts.
- Sep Andalusian Parliament passes a resolution opposing the repair of Tireless and calling for a nuclear-free Straights of Gibraltar.
- Oct Ecologists in Accion (Andalusia) contact European Commission about Tireless.
- Oct 14 Rumours in Gibraltar that the cracks in Tireless are larger than first disclosed.
- Oct 21 MoD disclose that the problem on Tireless is far more serious than assumed. Cracks are at least ten times bigger than expected and could be the result of metal fatigue.
MoD withdrawn all 12 nuclear powered hunter-killer submarines from service.
- Oct 27 Tireless dominates a meeting between Tony Blair and Jose Maria Aznar in Madrid.
HMS Triumph arrives back in Devonport.
- Oct 28 The Guardian reports that the original incident on HMS Tireless came close to a meltdown.
- Oct 29 Tireless is the main news story in Spain and they repeat the Guardian story.
- Oct 31 Spanish nuclear experts express concern about dangers when reactor is started up again.
- Nov 3 Spanish experts visit Tireless. Gibraltar Government furious because they hadn't been informed and had been opposing the visit. Their stance was linked to a private letter to Robin Cook from his Spanish counterpart which raised issues about Gibraltar's status.
- Nov 6 MoD say HMS Triumph is clear of the flaw (It could not have been inspected in 1 week) and that signs of the Tireless flaw have been found on HMS Superb, Splendid, Trafalgar, Turbulent, Torbay and Talent.
- Nov 7 Spanish experts say that in future meetings on Tireless they should be told and shown more.
- Nov 8 Gibraltar Government says that if its experts ask to see the reactor and this is denied then they will oppose the repair.
- Nov 9 MoD reveal that HMS Triumph has sailed to sea again.
- Nov 11 Disclosed that on 10 October European Commission had asked the UK government for information about Tireless within one month and that no information had been given.