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Spanish in nuclear sub plea

MADRID

THE head of the regional government of southern Spain has pleaded with Tony Blair to take the crippled nuclear submarine HMS Tireless back to Britain from Gibraltar for repair.

The request "for the peace of mind and safety" of Spaniards living near the Rock was made in a letter sent to No 10 last Friday by Manuel Chaves, Socialist leader of the Andalucia government, it was revealed yesterday.

Asking that the Tireless be taken to a specialist port in Britain to be repaired, he wrote: "I feel obliged, as president of the Junta of Andalucia, to express my deep concern at the prolonged stay of the said nuclear craft."

Despite repeated assurances from the British Government that there is no danger, many in the region fear nuclear pollution.

HMS Tireless limped into port on May 19 after developing a problem in its reactor cooling system.