



Part of the
Guardian
Unlimited
network

Network guide

click

The Observer UK news

Home **UK news** International Politics Business Comment Leaders Focus
Sport Review Life Screen Travel Cash Letters



Repair of Navy subs likely to cost £30m

By Nick Paton Walsh
Sunday October 22, 2000

The Royal Navy faced fresh embarrassment last night when it emerged that the total cost of repairing all of the 12 hunter-killer submarines recalled to dock following reports of defects may exceed £30m.

The submarines - equipped with the PWR1 reactor system first brought into service almost 30 years ago - were recalled indefinitely to the Royal Navy Dockyards in Faslane and Devonport after engineers found cracks in the cooling system on one of the subs' reactors. It is now feared that the fault may be part of the submarine's original design will affect all 12 vessels.

John Large, an independent nuclear expert, said that each submarine could require 'three to four months work'. Although the cost of the materials would be small, he said: 'You are going to need to pay for berthing space for each submarine, absorb the cost of each vessel being disarmed, and you will have to accommodate the mariners somehow.'

'There is also a lot of specialised equipment to be used. You could be talking about £3m for each submarine.'

The Ministry of Defence said of the claims: 'It is far too early to comment.'

The defect involves small cracks in welds on the cooling system of the submarine's nuclear reactor; some experts believe these fissures are a sign of deeper problems. The Navy tightened monitoring procedures after similar

Observer sections

Tools

- Text-only version ▶
- Send it to a friend ▶
- Read it later ▶
- See saved stories ▶

The Observer

- Front page ▶
- Story index ▶

In this section

[CJD kills girl, 14, as deadly waste spreads](#)

[Railtrack boss faces the sack as chaos grows for travellers](#)

[Fury as Blair rules out fuel tax retreat](#)

[Trimble survives challenge](#)

[Dramatic new link to Israeli embassy bomb](#)

[I want to ask killers 'why?'](#)
[says Bulger mother](#)

[My journey to hell and back](#)
[\(aka 15.38 Glasgow-](#)
[Euston\)](#)

[Finest hour for actor who](#)
[was Churchill's radio voice](#)

[Foreign tongues spread the](#)
[English word](#)

[Private hospitals to bail out](#)
[NHS](#)

[Straw tells suburbia to](#)
['snitch' on thugs](#)

[News in brief](#)

[Troops head for trouble spot](#)

[Losses double at Prince's](#)
[TV firm](#)

[Bomb victim families ready](#)
[for court fight](#)

[Children suffer stress over](#)
[their 'love lives'](#)

[Was revenge the key to](#)
[priest's gay sex murder?](#)

[Toxic fumes from refuse](#)
[ovens could kill 9,000](#)

[Diana's death prompted big](#)
[rise in suicide rate](#)

[Revealed: affair that led](#)
[Everest pioneer to attempt](#)
[fatal climb](#)

[Airlines give humans less](#)
[room than dogs](#)

[Warrior, nomad or settler...](#)
[so which tribe are you from?](#)

[ITV drama in turmoil over](#)
[new ad breaks](#)

[Long road ahead in battle](#)
[against racism](#)

[Football's past giants face](#)
[worst penalty](#)

[UK cities bid for Europe's](#)
[cultural crown](#)

[How sleep can save your](#)
[life](#)

[Rural rebel says Thatcher](#)
[was to blame for woes](#)

generic cracks in cooling pipes were discovered in Polaris subs almost a decade ago.

The indefinite suspension of the 12 subs will leave a gaping hole in Britain's nuclear arsenal. Hunter-killers are often used to protect the larger Trident subs and form an essential part of Nato's defence programme.