

Hunter-killer Submarines

Mr. Breed: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how many nuclear hunter-killer submarines will be berthed in Devonport at a single time (a) awaiting rectification work and (b) while rectification work is being carried out; [135757]

(2) how many hunter-killer submarines he estimates will be berthed in Devonport in order to carry out rectification work to prevent leakages in their cooling systems; [135756]

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(3) what estimate he has made of the likely duration of rectification work being carried out on hunter-killer submarines in Devonport. [135752]

Mr. Spellar: The full inspection programme for nuclear-powered hunter-killer submarines will not be completed until mid-November. The results of the inspections will then need to be analysed and a rectification programme developed for those submarines that require repair. For these reasons, it is impossible at this stage to estimate how long the repair programme at Devonport will take, or the number of submarines that will be under repair or awaiting repair there at any one time. I can confirm, however, that each repair is expected to take some months, but that it should be possible to work on more than one submarine at a time. In addition to Devonport, repairs could be undertaken at HM Naval Base Clyde.