



Thursday, November 2, 2000

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FIVE HUNTER- KILLER SUBMARINES CLEAR OF DEFECT

Britain's Naval Fleet today expressed a sigh of relief as five submarines have been cleared of having a defect which was thought might affect the whole fleet and would take over two years to repair according to experts.

Geoff Hoon, Secretary of State for Defence, informed the House of Commons this afternoon that the initial phase of the inspection programme of our hunter-killer submarines was now complete.

In a statement to the House of Commons he said that the inspections had shown "that there is no evidence of this problem in five submarines. Although four of these were already alongside undergoing repair, maintenance or refit, this means that HMS TRIUMPH, which has the capability to launch Tomahawk missiles, will return to operational duties shortly." Further adding that "Analysis of more detailed inspections will allow a recovery programme to be set in place for those submarines which are affected." Geoffrey Hoons added that the Ministry of Defence expected to have this programme established by the end of November."

The news comes at a time in which questions were being asked about the nuclear deterrent capabilities of the British Navy. The Defence Secreatray was able to conclude that the news meant that "In the short term, HMS TRIUMPH's availability means that we are much better placed to conduct operations, including those in support of the deterrent".

There are still 6 submarines with signs of flaws and one, HMS Tireless still at berth and awaiting repairs.

The status of the UK SSN is as follows:

HMS SOVEREIGN	Faslane for maintenance	Clear of flaw
HMS SEPTRE	Refit in Rosyth	Clear of flaw
HMS SPARTAN	Refit in Rosyth	Clear of flaw
HMS TRENCHANT	Refit in Devonport	Clear of flaw
HMS TRIUMPH	Devonport	Clear of flaw
HMS SUPERB	Faslane for maintenance	Signs of flaw
HMS SPLENDID	Faslane	Signs of flaw



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