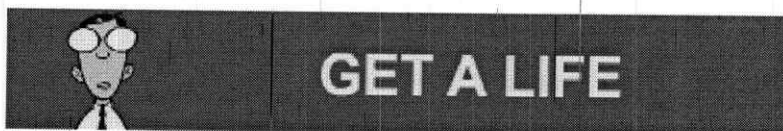


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### Royal Navy recalls hunter killer nuclear submarines for safety checks

AP

21 October 2000

The Royal Navy has recalled Britain's fleet of hunter killer nuclear-powered submarines because of safety fears.

The fleet of 12 submarines will be taken out of service while defence officials inspect them for a possible defect linked to the nuclear reactor system.

The decision followed the discovery of a small coolant leak in the propulsion system on the HMS Tireless, which limped into Gibraltar on May 19. That submarine remains stranded while British officials carry out repairs.

"We are taking a precautionary measure in recalling our hunter killer submarines to carry out a check to see whether or not there is any evidence that the defect that affected HMS Tireless is evident in their systems," a Ministry of Defence spokesman said. "In other words, we are checking to see if it is a generic defect."

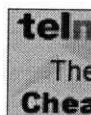
The Ministry of Defence said only two of its hunter killer subs are currently on patrol. One is off the south coast of France and the other is off the Scottish coast. Both have begun their journey home.

The other nine remain in their home ports. HMS Tireless will remain in Gibraltar.

"Clearly we would rather not have our hunter killer submarines alongside undergoing nuclear safety checks," the defence spokesman said. "But ostensibly with the security situation in the world today, we feel we can afford to do this. We are not prepared to compromise on nuclear safety."

Defence officials said they did not know how long the checks would take.

The Ministry of Defence spokesman said Britain's four larger Trident class submarines, which provide a nuclear deterrent, were not affected and remain on patrol.



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