

## **Submarine problems - possible P.Q.s**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nature of the reactor defect which was discovered on HMS Sceptre in 1998, whether this was related to recent decisions to withdraw nuclear powered submarines from operational service, and to make a statement.

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the nature of the reactor defect which was discovered on HMS Tireless in Gibraltar and what steps his department took to assess the severity of the defect soon after it occurred.

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps are being taken to reassess the safety case for the repair of HMS Tireless in Gibraltar.

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he is satisfied that the reactor problem which has been discovered on HMS Tireless could not occur on a Vanguard class submarine.

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his department has brought forward plans to decommission any nuclear powered submarines as a result of the defects discovered on HMS Tireless and HMS Sceptre.

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimates his department has made of the timescale for inspecting and repairing Swiftsure and Trafalgar class submarine reactors.

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what roles HMS Vanguard is expected to undertake during the next 12 months.

## **Notes**

On 7th September HMS Sovereign and HMS Superb were withdrawn from service when a fault discovered on HMS Sceptre in 1998 was reassessed. The Navy have indicated this was not the same problem as on HMS Tireless.

The Navy were probably aware in May that the problem with HMS Tireless was potentially more serious.

The PWR2 reactor on Vanguard class submarines was developed from the PWR1 used on the older submarines.

HMS Vanguard is probably not armed with missiles and might be used in a hunter-killer role. It was originally schedule to enter its first refit in 2000, but this has been delayed until 2002 because the refit complex at Devonport is not ready.