

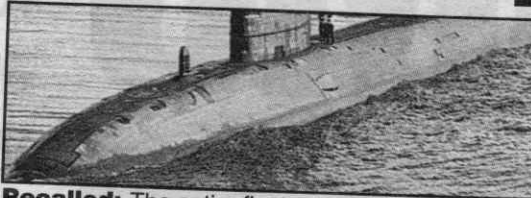
Sub faces Faslane checks over nuclear safety fears

By JAMES MULHOLAND

THE FIRST British nuclear submarine to see active service in last year's Kosovan conflict is racing to Faslane for safety checks.

Hunter-killer sub HMS Splendid has been recalled from service in the Mediterranean for checks at the Clyde base on its nuclear cooling system.

It follows the discovery of a crack in the cooling system of HMS Tireless last week, prompting the recall of the



Recalled: The entire fleet must now be checked

entire fleet of subs. It leaves Britain without a single submarine capable of patrolling UK waters.

Top brass at the Ministry of Defence say the health of sailors is fine, but they are "not prepared to compromise on safety". A spokesman said:

"Clearly, this is not a situation we relish but we have a problem. Cost is not an issue."

An MoD insider said last week: "The recall is embarrassing."

This is the latest safety scare for the MoD after most of the Navy's Lynx helicopters

were grounded for checks.

Last year, Splendid became the first British submarine to fire deadly accurate Cruise missiles at Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian forces.

A Faslane insider said last night: "Splendid is a tremendous sub. It will be great to see the boys again and, hopefully, nothing will be wrong with it."

● A team of Russian and Norwegian divers yesterday began cutting into sunken nuclear submarine, the Kursk, in an effort to recover the bodies of the 118 Russian sailors who died on board.