10 Jan 2007 :

Nuclear Deterrent

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what factors determined *(a)* the expected operating cost of the **Trident** replacement cited in the White Paper The future of the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent and *(b)* the costs of **Trident** cited in 1994; and if he will make a statement. [109888]

Des Browne: A number of factors determined the estimate (set out in paragraph 5-14 of the White Paper: "The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent" (Cm 6994), published on 4 December) of the expected in-service costs of the UK nuclear deterrent once a new fleet of SSBNs comes into service. The estimate drew on: projections based on the actual and planned future maintenance and operating costs of the current system, including manpower costs; assessments of in-service costs of system components; studies of potential infrastructure and disposal costs; projected costs of the Atomic Weapons Establishment; and an assessment of the impact of risk.

The estimate of the lifetime operating costs of **Trident** provided by the MOD to the House of Commons Defence Committee in 1993, shortly before the first of the Vanguard class submarines, HMS Vanguard, entered operational service, included projections for: manpower and related costs of the crews of the submarines and associated civilian staff; the costs of refits of the submarines over the lifetime of the force; the costs of stores and stores personnel and transport; a share of the running costs of the Clyde submarine base; the costs of the Atomic Weapons Establishment; in-service support of the strategic weapons system and the submarine; and decommissioning and disposal of the submarines.

Trident (8 March 2007)

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will update the committed and contingent figures in table 7 of Annexe B to Supporting Essay 6 of the Strategic Defence Review 1998; [124047]

(2) what the estimated annual operating cost is of conventional forces *(a)* committed to the protection of Trident and *(b)* with a contingent role in the protection of Trident, calculated on the same basis as the figures provided in the answer to the hon. Member for Crawley of 2 November 1998, *Official Report*, columns 349-50W, on Trident. [124048]

Des Browne: In addition to the four Vanguard-class submarines, all of which are dedicated to Military Task 1.2—Nuclear Deterrence—the current planned force elements assigned to support nuclear deterrence are shown in the following table. The changes in both committed and contingent forces since publication of Supporting Essay 6 of the Strategic Defence Review reflect the changing nature of the threat to the deterrent, and of our response to that threat as described in paragraphs 2.7 and 2.8 of the 2004 White Paper, 'Delivering Security in a Changing World—Future Capabilities' (CM6269).

Force element	*Committed* [1]	*Contingent* [2]
Attack submarines	0	2
Destroyers and frigates	0	1
Minewarfare vessels	1	3
Royal fleet auxiliary vessels	0	1
Survey vessels	1	0
Merlin ASW helicopters	0	5
Maritime and reconnaissance aircraft	0	8

[1] Force elements committed to the military task as their primary role
[2] Force elements held contingent are assigned to a number of tasks and are not planned routinely to deploy in support of the deterrent.

We do not routinely calculate the operating cost of specific committed or contingent force elements in support of the deterrent, and such estimates are necessarily illustrative, given the differing cost of varied operating patterns. A broad order estimate, however, of the annual operating costs of committed conventional force elements would be around £25-30 million.

A similar estimate for contingent conventional force elements would be around £250-300 million, although this is the estimated cost of generating these force elements for a range of tasks and it is not the cost of support to the deterrent.

These estimated costs are not directly comparable to those given in 1998, as the calculation has been conducted on a different basis using a more recent methodology.