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Subject: Blair on Trident replacement

Extract from Paxman interview 20 April 2005

Paxman: While we're on defence, Prime Minister, the British independent nuclear deterrent is going to need replacing, probably a decision that has to be taken in the next government that takes office after May 5. Will you replace it.

Blair: Well, we've got to retain our nuclear deterrent, and we've had an independent nuclear deterrent for a long time. Now that decision is for another time, but in principle I believe it's important to retain our own independent deterrent.

Paxman: A continuing independent nuclear deterrent.

Blair: I believe that is the right thing for the country. I think it's important that however we look at all the different aspects of it ... And a decision hasn't yet been taken.

Paxman: And the billions of pounds that are involved, you're prepared to make available?

Blair: Well, we have to see. Cost is one aspect to it. But I think it's important this country retains a strong defence at all times.

Paxman: Would cost convince you not to go ahead with it?

Blair: You just ... Look, there's no point in speculating about that at the moment because we're a long way off taking the decision.