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### UK Completes Successful Test Launch of Trident Missile

By UK Ministry of Defence

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The first of the UK's Trident submarines, HMS Vanguard, part of the UK's nuclear deterrent, successfully launched an unarmed Trident II D5 ballistic missile during a naval exercise in the Atlantic Ocean on 10 October 2005.

HMS Vanguard has recently completed a period of routine maintenance. This test launch is the final part of trials prior to her return to operational service. Admiral Sir Alan West, the First Sea Lord, who was on HMS Vanguard as an observer during the exercise, said:

"I am pleased to report that HMS Vanguard's test firing has been a success. While this is very much business as usual for the Royal Navy, this firing demonstrates that the UK's nuclear deterrent remains highly effective and capable and that the boat's crew have met the stringent safety requirements for handling, maintaining and operating the system.

"These are a highly complex series of operations and hard work for the ship's company and this is where they show their immense professionalism by achieving the task.

"HMS Vanguard will shortly be ready to take over duty on operational deployment."

HMS Vanguard is the first of the Royal Navy's Trident class submarines to complete a Long Overhaul Period. Before returning to operational readiness, to guarantee the professional standards of her crew, she must complete a series of tests called the Demonstration and Shakedown Operations (DASO).

This is a routine exercise, which culminates in the test firing of an unarmed Trident missile. The DASO ensures that the submarine crew are fully trained to meet the stringent safety and operational standards required.

Royal Navy submarines have successfully maintained continuous At Sea Deterrence for the past 37 years. During this overhaul period the strategic deterrent is maintained by other submarines of the United Kingdom's Strategic Deterrent Force.

This was the eighth occasion on which a Royal Navy submarine has test-fired a Trident II D5 missile, and the first for a Trident boat on completion of a Long Overhaul Period. The firing marks the final stage of the re-qualification of the submarine crew, and provides reliability and accuracy data which confirms the effectiveness of the strategic weapon system.

The firing also demonstrates the absolute reliability of the United Kingdom's nuclear deterrent.

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