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Submarines

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the recommendations by RAND to co-ordinate the Royal Navy's submarine design work with the United States of America. [32681]

Mr. Ingram: As a result of the RAND recommendations put forward in their report on sustaining design and production resources, a statement of intent (Sol) for co-operation and exchange between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain on submarine concepts, design and construction was signed on 7 October 2005.

The Sol records the intention to work, to mutual advantage, in developing working relationships and agreements that enable the sharing of analysis and data on submarine platform and equipment requirements, concepts and design.

Additionally, the Sol provides for the benefits of interoperability and synergy in submarine construction, equipment production and logistic support to be maximised. Such work will not compromise the retention of submarine design capability in this country.