

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.