

alliance will be based on the principle of complementarity between the facilities and activities of NATO and WEU so duplication should be avoided. In this context, WEU's Petersberg declaration of June 1992 made it clear that WEU would have no permanent forces or headquarters of its own.

Trident

Mr. Bennett: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will be the average annual running costs of Trident.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The average annual running cost of Trident over its life is expected to be about £190,000,000, at 1992-93 prices. This includes the estimated costs of manpower; stores and spares; refits; and the in-service support of warheads, the submarines and their weapons systems. In addition it includes an allowance for decommissioning and disposal costs, and a share of the Clyde submarine base's operating costs.

Western European Union

Mr. Cash: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence out of what departmental budgets current United Kingdom contributions to the WEU come; and out of what departmental budgets they will come in future.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: United Kingdom contributions to the WEU are currently funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, with my Department and the Department of Trade and Industry contributing to the United Kingdom's share of the WEU's current involvement in space-related activities. These arrangements remain subject to review.

Nuclear Weapon Transport Accidents

Mr. Llew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when his director of nuclear policy and security received a copy of the recent analysis of Ministry of Defence advice to civil authorities responding to nuclear weapon transport accidents, published by the nuclear free local authorities; and what plans he has to make a response to the report.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The document was received on 10 May 1993. Officials will consider it carefully and respond to it in due course.

Genetically Modified Organisms

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether any stocks of genetically modified organisms are currently held by his Department; and if he will make a statement;

(2) whether any work by his Department is currently undertaken or is planned for the future which utilises techniques of genetic modification of organisms.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: These are matters for the chief executive of the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment, who will write to my hon. Friend.

Letters from Graham Pearson to Mrs. Ann Winterton, dated 17 May 1993:

1. Your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Defence asking him whether any stocks of genetically

modified organisms are currently held by his Department; and if he will make a statement (Question 8, Order Paper 12 May 1993) has been passed to me to reply as Chief Executive of the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment.

2. The role of the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment is to carry out research to ensure that the United Kingdom Armed Forces are provided with effective protective measures against the threat that chemical or biological weapons may be used against them. As part of the research programme to counter the threat from biological warfare it is necessary to use genetic methods of modifying organisms. This research work generates small quantities of genetically modified organisms using processes that are both time consuming and costly. It is for this reason that small samples of each genetically manipulated organism are stored in secure conditions that meet the requirements of the Health and Safety Executive so that they can be re-evaluated at a later stage should the need arise. Genetically modified organisms that do not exhibit properties of value to the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment research programme are destroyed.

3. In 1986 the then Chemical Defence Establishment was registered as a centre for genetic engineering with the Health and Safety Executive and all work with genetically manipulated organisms at the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment is carried out under the strict guidelines published by the Advisory Committee on Genetic Manipulation.

1. Your Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Defence asking him whether any work by his Department which is currently undertaken or is planned for the future utilises techniques of genetic manipulation of organisms (Question 13, Order Paper 12 May 1993) has been passed to me to reply as Chief Executive of the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment.

2. The role of the Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment is to carry out research to ensure that the United Kingdom Armed Forces are provided with effective protective measures against the threat that chemical or biological weapons may be used against them. In order to carry out this work, it is necessary to assess the threat to the United Kingdom Armed Forces from genetically modified organisms.

3. The Chemical and Biological Defence Establishment, Porton Down uses genetic methods of manipulation in its current research programme and has plans to do so in the future. The purpose of the research is to assess the biological warfare threat from genetically manipulated organisms and to produce effective protective measures including medical countermeasures against their use. The results of this work is usually published in the scientific literature.

Mrs. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is his policy on preventing the development, both nationally and internationally, of genetically modified viruses or other agents as weapons of war.

Mr. Archie Hamilton: The Biological Weapons Act 1974 prohibits the development, production, acquisition and possession of any biological agent or toxin of a type and in a quantity which has no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes. This Act implemented the United Kingdom national obligation to enforce the biological and toxin weapons convention. The Export of Goods (Control) Order 1992 introduced controls on the export of specific biological materials and certain human and animal pathogens which could be misused for weapons purposes. Both Acts and the convention apply equally to all microbial or other biological agents whether natural, enhanced or modified.

It is our intention to continue to contribute to international efforts to prevent the development or acquisition of biological and toxin weapons by potential proliferators, specifically, to pursue the strengthening of the implementation of the biological and toxin weapons