

Trident Replacement Update 15 August 2007

Comprehensive Spending Review

On 25 July 2007 Des Browne announced that the MoD and the Treasury had reached an agreement on the amount of Defence spending over the three year period covered by the Comprehensive Spending Review. The totals are £34 billion for 2009/10, £35.3 billion for 2009/10 and £36.9 billion for 2010/2011.¹ This represents an increase of £7.7 billion over this period. There will be additional funding for operations. Further details of the settlement will be announced in October when the full Spending Review is published.

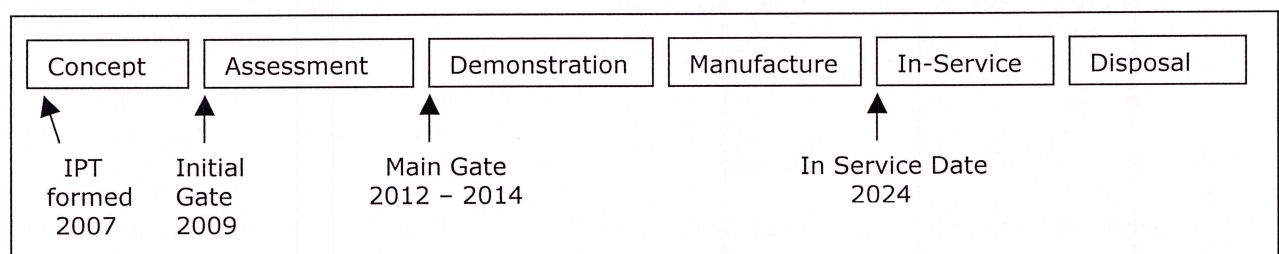
Specific figures for Trident are not known. However it was previously announced that annual expenditure would be around £1.5 billion per year. This suggest that the total for three years is likely to be around £4.5 billion. Of this around £1 billion is probably for the future submarine programme and the reconstruction of Aldermaston.

Timeline for the Future Submarine programme

On 26 July 2007 Des Browne, in response to a Parliamentary Question, said that the Initial Gate for the future submarine was currently estimated to be 2009.² This is one of the key milestones in the MoD acquisition process.

At the start of any MoD project an Integrated Project Team (IPT) is created. The first task of the ISP is to carry out concept studies. The Future Submarine (FSM) IPT was formed in May 2007. This is the main vehicle for progressing work on the new ballistic-missile submarine.³ The team leader of the FSM IPT, Andrew Mackinder, briefed industry representatives at a meeting at the MoD logistics headquarters in Abbey Wood, Bristol on 29 June 2007.

MoD Acquisition Life Cycle for the Future Submarine Programme ⁴



There are two decision points in the MoD procurement process – the Initial Gate and the Main Gate. The Initial Gate is towards the end of the concept studies phase. After the Initial Gate there is an assessment phase.

"Initial Gate remains the first approval point in the life cycle, being a relatively low threshold event to approve Assessment Phase strategy and funding".⁵

"Sponsors and project teams are required to develop a business case at both these stages [initial and main gate] justifying the project proceeding to the next stage".⁶

¹ Hansard 25 July 2007

² Hansard 26 July 2007

³ Preview, MoD, June 2007; http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/34EC9779-7366-4081-A128-62B7C84E6820/0/200704_Preview_june07.pdf

⁴ Based on the stages outlined in Implementation of Integrated Project Teams, MoD.

⁵ Acquisition Operating Framework, www.aof.mod.uk

The second milestone is the Main Gate.

"Main Gate occurs before a project moves into manufacture or contract signature and is the main investment decision point".⁷

On 14 March 2007 Tony Blair said that the "gateway stage ... when we let the main contracts for design and construction" would be between 2012 and 2014.⁸ This refers to the Main Gate. Tony Blair said that at this point it would be open to Parliament to take a decision. However the Initial Gate provides another, earlier point of political intervention.

Rear Admiral Matthews, Director General Nuclear, said earlier this year -

"the decision to maintain the posture of continuous deterrence and replace the Vanguard class of SSBN will require us to deliver one of the largest defence procurement programmes that this country has ever seen."⁹

Given the scale of the project, the Initial Gate in 2009 should be not just an internal decision within the MoD, but a political debate and decision. In his reply on 26 July 2007, Des Browne indicated that after the Initial Gate the MoD would submit its first full report to Parliament on the progress of the programme. Parliament should be fully involved at this stage and should have the opportunity to halt the programme at this early point.

Faslane/Devonport environmental study

As part of the Future Submarine programme, the MoD are carrying out a study of the current environmental conditions at Faslane and Coulport -

"The environmental baseline study will identify the existing environmental conditions at the current operating and maintenance bases (Clyde and Devonport respectively). The findings of the Study will be taken into account in the planning phases of any related infrastructure."¹⁰

The baseline study would gather information on biodiversity, population, human health, fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage, including architectural and archaeological heritage and landscape.

Briefings were held at Abbey Wood, Bristol on 8 June 2007 and at the MoD, Kentigern House, Glasgow on 15 June 2007. A Scottish Executive representative attended the Glasgow meeting to consider industrial issues. A delegate from the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency also attended.¹¹

John Ainslie
Coordinator,
Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
15 August 2007

⁶ ibid

⁷ ibid

⁸ Hansard 14 March 2007

⁹ Preview, MoD, April 2007, page 15. http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/34EC9779-7366-4081-A128-62B7C84E6820/0/200704_Preview_April07.pdf

¹⁰ Letter from Tom McKane, Director General Strategic Requirements, MoD, to Martin McCloskey, Policy Adviser Scottish Executive, 24 May 2007, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

¹¹ Correspondence obtained under the Freedom of Information Act