

Proliferation In Parliament Summer 2011

Proliferation in Parliament offers a review of news, debates and developments in the UK Parliament and Government on issues relating to nuclear weapons, disarmament and proliferation.

The *Summer 2011* edition, compiled by [Kat Barton](#), looks at parliamentary discussion over the [cost and the procurement process for the UK's renewal of its Trident nuclear weapons system](#), as well as the government's [consideration of alternatives to Trident](#) and the [broader context](#) in which the project is being pursued. This edition also offers an update on the status of the [UK's contributions to nuclear disarmament](#) and its other commitments on the international stage, in particular carrying forward the [2012 conference on a Middle East WMD Free Zone](#). The review concludes with a short round-up of parliamentary questions and developments in relation to [proliferation challenges by other states](#), specifically Iran.

Previous editions of *Proliferation in Parliament* are available at www.acronym.org.uk/parliament

[Trident renewal: context, costs & alternatives](#)

On 3 August 2011, two weeks after the UK Parliament rose for its summer recess and shortly before the first of the riots that dominated the UK political agenda during the month of August, the Commons Defence Select Committee – a cross-party committee of MPs – published its [report on the coalition government's 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review \(SDSR\) and National Security Strategy \(NSS\)](#). Commenting on the report's findings, Chair of the committee James Arbuthnot MP (Conservative, North East Hampshire) criticised the government for its ["rushed" and "badly done" SDSR](#), which he described as having been put into the "straitjacket of the comprehensive spending review" and conducted "without proper consultation". Responding to the findings, Shadow Defence Secretary Jim Murphy (Labour, East Renfrewshire) said "events have exposed the mismatch between policy ambition and the resources provided by ministers". Picking up on the unaffordability issue, Cathy Jamieson MP (Labour, Kilmarnock & Loudoun) claimed that in the light of government-imposed cuts to public services there is ["no longer a case for wasting MoD resources on nuclear weapons"](#). Similarly, Katy Clark MP (Labour, North Ayrshire and Arran), argued in a blog on the *New Statesman's* website that the UK cannot afford Trident and urged the Labour Party [not to shy away from the issue at its September conference](#). A [blog post by Guardian Security Editor Richard Norton-Taylor](#) meanwhile, highlighted a further disparity: "No-one in Whitehall, it seems, can admit that Britain can no longer afford, that a majority of Britons may not even want to aspire to, the kind of military power the country had got used to, historically". One particular problem, Norton-Taylor noted, is the "reluctance to question Defence Secretary Liam Fox's determination to replace the Trident fleet of nuclear missile submarines", the cost of which is now estimated by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to be £25bn – although that excludes the price of warheads, the lease of Trident missiles from the US and running costs for the system over its lifetime.

Indeed, the longstanding problem of the cost of replacing the Trident nuclear weapons system was brought to the forefront back in May when - on the occasion of its announcement that the Initial Gate phase of the project had been passed (see [Proliferation in Parliament Spring 2011](#)) - the Coalition Government [virtually doubled its estimate for the price tag of the submarine portion of the project – from £11-14 billion \(announced in 2006\) to £25 billion](#). At the time, MPs concerned over the increase, such as Linda Riordan (Labour/Coop, Halifax) and Katy Clark (Labour, North Ayrshire and Arran), sought clarification as to the revised costs for the preliminary phases of the project. The government responded by confirming the figures it had previously published as part of its Initial Gate report – that [outturn prices \(including inflation\) for the Concept and Assessment phases are £900 million and £3 billion respectively](#), up from £850 million and £2.3 billion in 2006. With the defence budget already curtailed by the October 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and under strain on account of a deficit of £38 billion, opposition MPs were not the only ones apprehensive about the future. In July it was reported that the [MoD is locked into yet another battle with the Treasury](#), thereby intensifying questions over the costs, benefits, priority and opportunity costs of Trident replacement as compared with other areas of government expenditure.

The other Initial Gate-related announcement to draw the attention of parliamentarians was the news that the government would be undertaking an 18-month study to review the "costs, feasibility and

credibility of alternative systems and postures” to the Trident system. Responding to the resulting questions in Parliament, the [government confirmed the process for conducting the review](#) as follows: it is being led by a senior civil servant and a project manager in the Cabinet Office and overseen by Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey (Liberal Democrat, North Devon) who is reporting to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister; that the National Security Council (NSC) will not have a formal role in the review; the costs of the review will be met from within existing departmental budgets; and the review will for the most part be unpublished. In addition, when asked by MPs Mike Hancock (Liberal Democrat, Portsmouth South) and Dan Jarvis (Labour, Barnsley Central) about the government’s [consideration of alternatives to nuclear deterrence](#), Defence Secretary Liam Fox (Conservative, North Somerset) used the previous government’s 2006 White Paper on “The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent” to validate his claim that deterrence can only be achieved via the possession of nuclear weapons. He also made clear his view that the remit of the alternatives review is limited solely to nuclear deterrence and that as a result the review would not explore alternative strategies for deterring aggression against the UK. Fox’s responses to MPs during the debate which followed his 18 May [Initial Gate statement in the Commons](#) underscored the immovability of his position. Responding to concerns over the alternatives review, raised (amongst others) by Shadow Defence Secretary Jim Murphy (Labour, East Renfrewshire) and John Woodcock MP (Labour, Barrow and Furness, which includes the Barrow shipyards where the submarines are expected to be made), Dr Fox declared himself to be [“absolutely confident that the study is very likely to come to exactly the same conclusion as the 2006 White Paper”](#).

One day before the Initial Gate and Alternatives Review announcement, Peter Luff (Conservative, Mid Worcestershire), Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology, revised his previous response regarding suggestions of closer defence and nuclear collaboration between the UK and France. Jeremy Corbyn MP (Labour, Islington North) had enquired as to what proposals Luff had made “to his French counterpart on the future joint development of ship submersible ballistic nuclear fleets”. Just days before, Luff had responded to the same question by telling the Commons that no proposals had been made. When Corbyn repeated the question on 17 May, Luff then informed MPs that [“We have, with our French colleagues, identified a number of potential areas for cooperation around submarine enterprise management and some specific equipments and technologies”](#), adding that detailed proposals were yet to be considered by both governments. Then in July, former Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett (Labour, Derby South) added to the debate over alternatives by [raising the possibility of “not necessarily needing four boats”](#) thereby questioning the UK’s adherence to a policy of maintaining ‘continuous-at-sea-deterrence’ (CASD) patrols.

Following the Initial Gate statement, other Trident renewal related questions in Parliament centred on the cost of the various components for the project. One particular area of interest to parliamentarians was the [costs associated with the government’s decision to use the new PWR3](#) (Pressurised Water Reactor 3) in the four Vanguard replacement submarines. Disturbingly, the minister responsible, Peter Luff, refused to provide detailed costs of submarine components on the basis that disclosure could “prejudice commercial interests”. Further probing by Paul Flynn (Labour, Newport West) as to whether any of the £59 million spent on US high steam generators and technology had contributed to the design of the PWR3 revealed that [£25 million had been used in this way](#). In addition, Luff responded to a [request from Angus Robertson \(SNP, Moray\) for information on plans for a prototype PWR3](#) by saying that an announcement would be made in due course. Meanwhile, [questioning by Caroline Lucas](#) (Green, Brighton Pavilion) revealed the estimated cost to the UK of designing the US-UK Common Missile Compartment (CMC) for the replacement submarines to be £103 million over the period 2011 – 2016. MoD Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Commons Andrew Robatham (Conservative, South Leicestershire), responded that the decision on where to build the UK's CMC is scheduled to be made during 2012, but that it could be delayed until the first quarter of 2014 “without any adverse impact on the overall successor programme”.

In light of MoD collaboration with the US on the development of UK nuclear weapons, Lord Stoddart of Swindon (Independent) speaking in the House of Lords raised the issue of [“whether the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons are capable of being developed independently of other states”](#). Lord Astor of Hever (Conservative), MoD Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Lords, assured Lord Stoddart that although certain components are obtained from overseas and Britain shares experimental facilities with other states, such activities “are undertaken in compliance with our international obligations and do not affect the independence of the UK's nuclear deterrent”.

[The UK on the international stage](#)

Whilst the UK government presses ahead with its plans to build a successor to its Trident nuclear weapon system, ongoing concerns over the spread of nuclear weapons have led several MPs to question the government over its efforts to halt proliferation and contribute meaningfully to nuclear disarmament. Responding to a question by Mike Hancock (Liberal Democrat, Portsmouth South), Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey (Liberal Democrat, North Devon), [denied there was any link between new proliferation and the UK's continued possession of nuclear weapons](#) and offered the UK's commitment to multilateralism and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as proof of British efforts to discourage and reduce nuclear proliferation. Subsequent questioning as to the extent of the government's financial commitment to nuclear disarmament revealed that the [2011-2012 Foreign and Commonwealth Office \(FCO\) budget for nuclear disarmament stands at £140,000](#).

Responding to enquiries into recent [UK progress and meetings on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation](#), the government chose to highlight its efforts at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and at a 29 June – 1 July 2011 follow-on meeting between the five NPT-recognised nuclear weapons states (NWS) as evidence of progress. [You can find additional analysis of the UK's role at the 2010 NPT Review Conference at http://www.acronym.org.uk/docs/1101/UK_gov_role_in_2010_NPT_Rev_Con.pdf] Despite being described by David Lidington (Conservative, Aylesbury) as a “significant demonstration” by the NWS of their “determination to make progress” on their commitments agreed in the 2010 NPT Review Conference Action Plan, the substance of the meeting, held in Paris, was [shrouded in secrecy](#). A request by Paul Flynn MP (Labour, Newport West) for access to the conference papers was denied and only a [short, post-conference, press statement](#) issued. According to the joint statement, the five, self-described in their statement as the ‘P5’ (thereby conflating their nuclear weapon status with their other role as permanent members of the UN Security Council) discussed transparency, verification, and confidence-building measures. The statement, which committed the five to further talks in the context of next year's NPT Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meeting, also appeared to highlight the responsibility of non-nuclear-weapon states for furthering nuclear disarmament as well as strengthening the non-proliferation regime by calling on all states to contribute to the objective of nuclear disarmament by “ensuring that the international nuclear non-proliferation regime remains robust and reliable”.

In related news, the Paris conference provided a timely opportunity for Defence Secretary Liam Fox to make a [public announcement](#) confirming that part of the process of reducing the number of warheads (as announced in the 2010 SDSR) had commenced. He later responded to questions from Caroline Lucas (Green, Brighton Pavilion), Angus Robertson (SNP, Moray) and Paul Flynn (Labour, Newport West) as to the completion date and verification provisions for the warhead reductions, saying that [reductions in operationally available warheads are estimated to be completed “within this Parliament” and the warheads dismantled by the mid-2020s](#) (as specified in the SDSR) but that the [reductions would not be officially verified as part of a multilateral process](#). Additional questioning by Kevan Jones (Labour, North Durham) on possible financial savings arising from the reduction in warhead numbers revealed little, as [Armed Forces Minister Nick Harvey \(Liberal Democrat, North Devon\) merely reiterated the government line that “tens of millions of pounds” are expected to be saved over the next 10 years as part of the £1.2 billion savings identified in the SDSR](#). This is in spite of more recent government published figures acknowledging that when inflation is taken into account the overall cost of maintaining the Trident nuclear weapons system will increase significantly.

The other international issue in which the UK has a key role is the convening of a Middle East WMD Free Zone (MEWMDFZ) conference scheduled for 2012 but currently bogged down by lack of agreement on both a host country for the conference and a high level diplomatic “facilitator” to consult with the countries of the region. In May, Lord Judd (Labour) speaking in the House of Lords, reflected widespread concerns over the feasibility of holding an effective conference in 2012 when he asked the government [what action the UK is taking to carry forward the conference](#). The UK as NPT depositary and co-sponsor, alongside the US and Russia, of the original 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, has institutional responsibilities in this regard. In response, Lord Howell of Guildford (Conservative), the minister responsible in the House of Lords, referred to a seminar being held under EU auspices in Brussels in July as a “useful chance to engage with key stakeholders”. Though the meeting was attended by most of the key players, a [post-seminar blog by Guardian security analyst Julian Borger](#)

characterised it as having produced little of substance, although it was acknowledged that getting the Iranians, Israelis and Arabs in one room was a positive step in itself, even if they then engaged in “finger wagging”.

Proliferation Challenges

The democracy movements described by many as an “Arab Spring” earlier this year have highlighted a range of security and regional questions going beyond Iran and its nuclear programme. However, as the UK Foreign Secretary’s regular updates in Parliament on the situation in Africa and the Middle East make reference to Iran, parliamentarians concerned about potential nuclear proliferation frequently used the opportunity to ask the government what action it is taking to prevent the Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability. The government’s standard response was that [the UK is using sanctions to apply pressure on the Iranian regime and that pressure “will intensify over the coming months unless \[Iran\] is prepared to negotiate about its nuclear programme”](#). In particular, parliamentarians were reminded that in early June [the UK “helped to extend Iran sanctions in the EU, with over 100 new designations”](#), after President Ahmadinejad announced his intention to triple production of uranium enriched to 20% and move this enrichment from Natanz to the underground site at Fordow following the 24 May 2011 publication of the [latest IAEA report on Iran](#) which used stronger language than ever before. Later in June, [Foreign Secretary William Hague \(Conservative, Richmond \(Yorks\)\) criticised Iran for having reportedly test-fired ballistic missiles](#) which he said were “capable of carrying a nuclear payload”. He also asserted the efficacy of sanctions saying that they had increased “the readiness of the regime in Tehran to negotiate”. Then in July, [a new round of travel restrictions against the Iranian regime was announced by the UK, US and Canada](#), appearing to indicate that international agreement has become increasingly elusive. In addition, talks between Iran and the P5+1 (Britain, France, Germany, China, Russia and the US) have remained stalled since January and there has been little mention of their resumption since then.

Index

1. [UK Trident renewal](#)
[Defence Select Committee report on SDSR](#)
[MPs respond by calling for Trident renewal to be questioned](#)
[Mind the gap](#)
[Increased cost of Trident replacement](#)
[Alternatives review](#)
[Consideration of alternatives](#)
[Debate following Initial Gate statement in Commons](#)
[Revised response over joint Anglo-French NW](#)
[Beckett on reducing sub numbers](#)
[New nuclear reactor](#)
[Independence of UK’s nuclear weapons](#)
2. [UK role internationally](#)
[Link between UK possession of nuclear weapons and proliferation](#)
[UK budget for nuclear disarmament](#)
[UK progress on nuclear disarmament](#)
[NWS follow-on meeting to 2010 NPT Review Conference](#)
[Warhead reductions](#)
[UK & Middle East WMD Free Zone](#)
3. [Proliferation challenges](#)
[Iran sanctions](#)
[Hague response to Iranian missile tests](#)
[More sanctions](#)

1) UK Trident renewal

Defence Select Committee report on SDSR

[The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy](#)

Defence Select Committee - Sixth Report, 3 August 2011

'Our Report outlines some major concerns regarding the capability decisions made in the current Strategic Defence and Security Review... The SDSR was unfinished business. It has been supplemented by a three month review and by further reports on the structure and senior management of the MoD, on the balance of Regular and Reserve Forces, on equipment, support, and technology for UK defence and security and the basing review. In the light of these changes it appears to us that despite statements to the contrary the SDSR has to all intent and purpose been re-opened and it has been done without the re-opening of the Comprehensive Spending Review.;

[MPs hit out at 'rushed' defence shake-up](#) (*subscription only*)

Kiran Stacey, Financial Times, 3 August 2011

'The recent overhaul of Britain's defence policy was rushed through and peppered with bad decisions, says an influential group of MPs... In its report on Wednesday on the Strategic Defence and Security Review, the defence select committee identifies a series of policy problems and rejects the government's line that Britain can maintain its current level of influence in the world while the defence budget is cut.'

MPs respond by calling for Trident renewal to be questioned

[Hiroshima Day, an apt time to question Trident](#)

Cathy Jamieson MP, Comment is Free, www.guardian.co.uk, 6 August 2011

'While the government slashes public services and conventional military forces, billions are being poured into nuclear projects... It is my personal view there is no longer a case for wasting Ministry of Defence resources on nuclear weapons. What better time than Hiroshima Day to renew our commitment to a world free of nuclear weapons, and continue the campaign to make it a reality.'

[The decision to renew Trident needs to be urgently reviewed](#)

Katy Clark MP, 'The Stagers' New Statesman Rolling Blog, www.newstatesman.com, 6 August 2011

'We can't afford it - and the Labour Party must not shy away from discussing this at September's conference.'

Mind the gap

[Need for real debate about role of UK armed forces](#)

Richard Norton-Taylor, Defence and Security Blog, www.guardian.co.uk, 3 August 2011

'No-one in Whitehall, it seems, can admit that Britain can no longer afford, that a majority of Britons may not even want to aspire to, the kind of military power the country had got used to, historically. One particular problem is the reluctance to question defence secretary Liam Fox's determination to replace the Trident fleet of nuclear missile submarines now estimated by the Ministry of Defence to cost £25bn, double earlier forecasts, by the time they are built. The figure does not include the price of warheads, the running costs and the bill for leasing Trident missiles from the US.'

Increased cost of Trident replacement

[New Trident fleet cost will top £25bn](#)

Richard Norton-Taylor and Allegra Stratton, The Guardian, 18 May 2011

'The figure was released as the Ministry of Defence announced significant new funding for a new Trident system even though, at the Lib Dems' behest, a final decision is not due to be taken until after the next general election... Fox announced that a further £3bn will be allocated to designing a new fleet of nuclear missile submarines, in addition to the £900m already spent.'

[Oral Answers to questions, Topical Question, 16 May 2011, Column 18](#)

T4. [55397] **Mrs Linda Riordan (Halifax) (Lab/Co-op):** The original White Paper for the Trident

replacement programme estimated a figure of £11 billion to £14 billion in 2006 prices, but in a recent letter to my hon. Friend the Member for North Ayrshire and Arran (Katy Clark), the Minister stated that

"the combined cost of the Concept Phase, totalling approximately £900 million, and the Assessment Phase, totalling approximately £3 billion at outturn prices is consistent with the departmental guidance that programmes should spend approximately 15% of the total costs before Main Gate."

It appears that this would put the cost of the whole programme at £26 billion. Will he confirm that that is an accurate projection?

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Peter Luff): As I previously explained in an Adjournment debate, all the costs that we are using are entirely consistent with the original projections. I will be delighted to spend some time with the hon. Lady explaining to her in detail exactly why that is the case.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Trident Submarines, 24 May 2011, Column 539W](#)

Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's latest estimate is of the cost for the Trident submarine replacement programme's concept phase and assessment phase in (a) constant 2006 prices and (b) project outturn prices accounting for inflation. [55475]

Graeme Morrice: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's most recent estimate is of the cost of the Trident submarine replacement programme's concept phase and assessment phase in (a) constant 2006 prices and (b) project outturn prices accounting for inflation. [56637]

Nick Harvey: The latest estimate of the cost of the Trident submarine replacement programme concept and assessment phases is as follows:

Phase	2006 constant prices	Outturn prices
Concept	£850 million	£900 million
Assessment	£2.3 billion	£3.0 billion

[£25bn defence shortfall leaves Cameron and Osborne at odds](#)

Nick Hopkins, The Guardian, 18 July 2011

'David Cameron is locked in a standoff with his chancellor over defence spending after a secret study concluded the government will need to find an extra £25bn to pay for its modernisation of the armed forces...' "If decisions are not taken soon, either to approve significant real defence spending growth after 2014 or to make further cuts in capabilities, the MoD will become increasingly reluctant to approve new financial commitments." [Malcolm Chalmers of *RUSI* said].

Alternatives review

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Weapons, 23 May 2011, Column 393W](#)

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the National Security Council will have a formal role in the review of alternatives to the nuclear deterrent. [57090]

Nick Harvey: As set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (Cm7948), the National Security Council approved the Trident value for money study and decided to proceed with the renewal of Trident and the submarine replacement programme. The aim of the review is to fulfil the coalition programme for Government by assisting the Liberal Democrats to make the case for alternatives: the National Security Council will not have a formal role in the review.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Weapons, 23 May 2011, Column 393W](#)

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence to whom the review of alternatives to the nuclear deterrent will report. [57091]

Nick Harvey: I will oversee the study and it will report jointly to the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Weapons, 23 May 2011, Column 394W](#)

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much of the cost of the review of alternatives to the nuclear deterrent will be met by (a) the Cabinet Office and (b) his Department. [57092]

Nick Harvey: Costs will be met from within existing departmental budgets. It is too early to predict how much will fall to the Cabinet Office and how much to the Ministry of Defence.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Weapons, 23 May 2011, Column 394W](#)

Mr Jim Murphy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of staff he plans to allocate to his review of alternatives to the nuclear deterrent; and what budget he plans to allocate to the review. [57093]

Nick Harvey: The study will be led by a senior civil servant and a dedicated project manager in the Cabinet Office. They will draw together inputs from a range of experts in the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Defence and other Departments. Costs will be met from within existing departmental budgets.

Consideration of alternatives

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Trident, 4 July 2011, Column 1053W](#)

Mr Mike Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what alternatives his Department has considered to the nuclear deterrent. [60386]

Dr Fox: Prior to the publication of the 2006 White Paper, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent* (Cm 6994), Ministry of Defence officials undertook a full review of the widest possible range of options to replace the UK's nuclear deterrent capability. A detailed assessment process to narrow the range of options under consideration to the four generic options reported in the White Paper was then used.

The parliamentary debate on 14 March 2007, *Official Report*, columns 298-407, subsequently endorsed the conclusions made in the White Paper that the most cost-effective deterrent system was a further class of submarines carrying ballistic missiles.

To support the agreement made in the Coalition programme for government, that the Lib Dems will continue to make the case for alternatives, work is under way in the Cabinet Office to explore the costs, feasibility and credibility of alternative systems. This work will report to the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister in approximately 18 months time.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Trident, 28 June 2011, Column 675W](#)

Dan Jarvis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the study to review the costs, feasibility and credibility of alternative systems and postures to the Trident missile delivery system will include the use of deterrents such as the intelligence services, Special Forces, or other capabilities available in the defence and security economy. [60883]

Dr Fox [*holding answer 22 June 2011*]: No. The purpose of the study is to examine alternative forms of nuclear deterrence, including alternative delivery systems and platforms, and to analyse their potential risks, benefits, and feasibility.

[House of Commons, Defence, Trident, 18 July 2011, Column 585W](#)

Dan Jarvis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 29 June 2011, *Official Report*, column 675W, on Trident, whether he has made an assessment of whether, if the funding allocated for the replacement of Trident were invested in other capabilities in the defence and security economy, including (a) intelligence services, (b) special forces, (c) the police and (d) other capabilities, a commensurate level of deterrence could be achieved. [66515]

Dr Fox: Our current analysis is that we cannot rule out the risk either that a major direct nuclear threat to the UK's vital interests will re-emerge or that new states will emerge that possess a more limited nuclear capability but nevertheless one that could pose a grave threat to our vital interests. We therefore see an enduring role for the UK's nuclear forces as an essential part of our capability for deterring nuclear-armed opponents. As stated in the 2006 White Paper "The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent" (Cm 6994) conventional capabilities cannot have the same deterrent effect as nuclear weapons.

This remains Government policy.

Debate following Initial Gate statement in Commons

[House of Commons, Ministerial Statements, Nuclear Deterrent, 18 May 2011, Column 351](#)

Too long to republish here – see link

Revised response over joint Anglo-French NW

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Submarines, 13 May 2011, Column 1363W](#)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals have been made by his

Department to its French counterparts on the future joint operation of ship submersible ballistic nuclear fleets. [55424]

Peter Luff: None.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Submarines, 17 May 2011, Column 112W](#)

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proposals he has made to his French counterpart on the future joint development of ship submersible ballistic nuclear fleets. [55423]

Peter Luff: We have, with our French colleagues, identified a number of potential areas for cooperation around submarine enterprise management and some specific equipments and technologies. Detailed proposals will be put to national authorities for consideration and agreement, taking account of extant international agreements and obligations.

Beckett on reducing sub numbers

[Former Top Diplomat Says U.K. Might be Able to Cut Trident Sub](#)

Global Security Newswire, 8 July 2011

'The United Kingdom might be able to cut one of its four submarines armed with nuclear-tipped Trident ballistic missiles, according to the nation's former top diplomat... The debate centers around "whether continuous at-sea deterrence is any longer a stance that you need to maintain, or whether you can take a less immediate approach," Beckett noted in an interview. "It is an issue that people are increasingly discussing and examining. And given that," she said, "takes you in the direction of not necessarily needing four boats"... Beckett also argued that the roughly 200 U.S. tactical nuclear weapons that analysts believe remain in the European theater are a relic of the Cold War face-off between the United States and Russia. While noting that their removal is a "sensitive" issue, both for U.S. allies and Moscow, "I think most people believe they are no longer of value," Beckett declared'

New nuclear reactor

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Submarines, 24 May 2011, Column 536W](#)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what estimate he has made of the cost to the public purse of the research, development and production of PWR3 for the four Vanguard replacement submarines; [56558]

(2) how much of the expenditure on developing and building the PWR3 reactor he expects to be incurred with suppliers in the United States; [56559]

(3) how much has been spent by his Department on research and development of the PRW2b reactor. [56560]

Peter Luff [*holding answer 23 May 2011*]: The Secretary of State for Defence, my right hon. Friend the Member for North Somerset (Dr Fox), announced to the House on 18 May 2011, *Official Report*, columns 351-363, the approval of the "Initial Gate" investment decision for the programme to replace the Vanguard submarines and the selection of a broad design option that included PWR3 to be taken forward into full design. A decision on the number of submarines will not be taken until main gate in 2016.

As detailed in 'The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report', the Ministry of Defence has spent around £900 million on the submarine concept phase, which included an analysis of the different reactor options. Additional research and development of PWR3 will take place as part of the assessment phase. Overall, this phase is expected to total some £3 billion. No further research or development of PWR2b will take place.

I am withholding more detailed costs of the submarine components as its disclosure would prejudice commercial interests.

Although further work needs to be done between now and main gate to refine our estimates, we expect the cost of the overall successor deterrent system to remain within the White Paper cost envelope of £15 billion to £20 billion at 2006-07 prices, of which £11 billion to £14 billion would be attributed to the cost of the replacement platform system.

A full copy of 'The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report' can be found at the following website:

http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7F9F5815-C67B-47B1-B5C4-168E8AB50DC3/O/submarine_initial_gate.pdf

Copies have been placed in the Vote Office and Library of the House.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Submarines, 24 May 2011, Column 537W](#)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of suitable sites for a prototype Pressurised Water Reactor 3; and if he will make a statement; [57094]
(2) if he will estimate the cost of building a prototype Pressurised Water Reactor 3; [57095]
(3) whether he has any plans to build a prototype Pressurised Water Reactor 3. [57096]

Peter Luff [*holding answer 23 May 2011*]: I will make an announcement in due course.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Trident Submarines, 22 June 2011, Column 302W](#)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 28 February, *Official Report*, column 82, on nuclear weapons, whether any part of the £59 million spent on United States high steam generators and technology contributed to the design of the PWR3 Trident reactor. [60543]

Peter Luff: Of the £59 million, £25 million has contributed solely to the PWR3 reactor concept design work. The remaining £34 million was spent on work and technology in support of the wider next generation propulsion plant concept phase assessment and design work.

UK-US Common Missile Compartment: costs & progress

[House of Commons, Written answers, Defence, Nuclear Submarines, 20 June 2011, Column 41W](#)

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the cost to the public purse will be of designing the US-UK Common Missile Compartment for the Trident replacement submarine in the period from 2011 to 2016; [60025]

(2) what proportion of the cost of the design of the US-UK Common Missile Compartment will be met by the public purse; and if he will make a statement; [60026]

(3) when he expects a decision to be made on the construction location of the US-UK Common Missile Compartment for the Trident replacement submarine; and if he will make a statement. [60027]

Mr Robathan: The cost to the UK Government of US-UK Common Missile Compartment activities over financial years 2011-12 to 2015-16 is estimated at £103 million. The UK has agreed to pay 12.5% of all non-recurring expenditure on design activities.

A decision on where the UK's Common Missile Compartment will be built is planned to be made during 2012. That decision could be made, however, anytime up until the first quarter of 2014 without any adverse impact on the overall successor programme.

Independence of UK's nuclear weapons

[House of Lords, Written answers, Nuclear Weapons, 18 July 2011, Column 249W](#)

Question

Asked by Lord Stoddart of Swindon

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the Written Statement by Lord Astor of Haver on 29 June (WS 154) concerning nuclear weapons, whether the United Kingdom's nuclear weapons are capable of being developed independently of other states. [HL10847]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence (Lord Astor of Haver): Yes. The nuclear physics package—the heart of the UK's nuclear warhead—is entirely designed and manufactured in the UK.

While the UK may choose to purchase certain non-nuclear warhead components and share experimental facilities with its allies, this is only undertaken where it is considered more efficient and/or cost-effective to do so and where national sovereignty is not compromised. In addition, such activities are undertaken in compliance with our international obligations and do not affect the independence of the UK's nuclear deterrent.

2) UK role internationally

Link between UK possession of nuclear weapons and proliferation

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Weapons, 27 June 2011, Column 539W](#)

Mr Mike Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the potential effects of the UK nuclear deterrent on the level of nuclear proliferation; and what steps he is taking to discourage and reduce nuclear proliferation. [61391]

Nick Harvey: There is no evidence to suggest that the UK nuclear deterrent has any bearing on the pursuit of nuclear weapons by those who currently seek to develop them. The UK maintains a

minimum credible deterrent and is committed to working towards the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

The nuclear non-proliferation treaty remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime, and the primary basis for our efforts to tackle proliferation. We support multilateral efforts to reduce the threat of proliferation such as through the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Suppliers Group, by promoting high standards for sensitive transfers of materials and technology and engaging with key partners on a bilateral basis. We remain determined to work with the international community to control proliferation, to build trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, and to take tangible steps towards a safer and more stable world where countries with nuclear weapons ultimately feel able to relinquish them. We strongly believe that sustainable global disarmament can be achieved only through a multilateral process.

UK budget for nuclear disarmament

[*House of Commons Debate, Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Nuclear Disarmament: Finance, 11 July 2011, Column 131W*](#)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's budget is for stimulating nuclear disarmament initiatives in 2011-12. [60548]

Mr Lidington: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is set to spend approximately £140,000 in 2011-12 on nuclear disarmament projects relating to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. This is in addition to resource allocated to nuclear disarmament related research by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the Atomic Weapons Establishment. Separate to our project spend, the majority of the FCO's resource towards making progress on nuclear disarmament comprises staff for multilateral negotiations, working groups and table-top exercises.

UK progress on nuclear disarmament

[*HC Deb, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 22 June 2011, Column 333W*](#)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings his Department has had with other nuclear armed signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to discuss the obligations of article VI of the treaty in the last 20 years. [61337]

Alistair Burt: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), in close collaboration with our Ministry of Defence colleagues, has discussed the Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT's) article VI disarmament obligations with the four other nuclear weapon states recognised by the treaty on innumerable occasions over the last 20 years. We have discussed our obligations at NPT Review Conferences and Preparatory Committees, the Conference on Disarmament, the UN's Disarmament Commission and First Committee, in bilateral ministerial and senior official meetings, and via videoconference. The FCO hosted a P5 Conference on nuclear disarmament in September 2009—bringing together for the first time policy makers, military staff and nuclear scientists from all five nuclear weapon states. We look forward to the next P5 Conference in Paris at the end of this month.

[*House of Commons, Oral Answers to Questions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, 19 July 2011, Column 772*](#)

3. **Paul Flynn (Newport West) (Lab):** What recent progress his Department has made on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. [66858]

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Alistair Burt): We continue to work across all three pillars of the non-proliferation treaty to build on the success of last year's review conference in New York. I am particularly proud of the work we have done towards ensuring the first conference of nuclear weapon states, which was held recently in Paris—the P5 conference—in which further progress was made, particularly towards disarmament.

Paul Flynn: Does not the tumult of the Arab spring mean it would be a good idea to advance the date of the planned conference next year? That would give us a real chance positively to involve both Iran and Israel.

Alistair Burt: The conference to which the hon. Gentleman draws attention was designed to provide for a weapon of mass destruction-free middle east and was part of the outcome of the review conference in New York last year. The steps taken to build up confidence to get to that conference are obviously complex and although it would be good if it could be advanced, the practical difficulties will probably outweigh that. The fact that it is there on the table as something for people to work to for

2012 is a good thing and we should concentrate on that, but any hopes that it might be brought forward may be dashed.

NWS follow-on meeting to 2010 NPT Review Conference

[House of Commons Debate, Defence, Nuclear Disarmament, 13 July 2011, Column 371W](#)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what matters were agreed at the meeting of the permanent members of the UN Security Council on nuclear disarmament held in Paris between 29 June and 1 July 2011; and if he will place in the Library copies of papers circulated by attending parties. [65184]

Mr Lidington: I have been asked to reply.

The P5 Conference in Paris was a significant demonstration by the five nuclear weapon states of their determination to make progress against their commitments agreed in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference Action Plan in May 2010. A public statement announcing the outcomes of the Conference was issued immediately afterwards and is available on the FCO website: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/news/latest-news/?view=PressS&id=627529382>

In order to facilitate frank discussions on sensitive issues, participants had agreed in advance that the detail of the discussions and papers circulated at the meeting would remain confidential. The meeting successfully contributed to building mutual trust between the P5; reaching agreement on further work on new confidence-building disarmament initiatives, including the establishment of a working group to enhance understanding of P5 nuclear terminology, and a confidential UK-hosted expert-level meeting later this year to share lessons from work that the UK has led on verification of nuclear warhead dismantlement.

Warhead reductions

[Written Ministerial Statements, Defence, Nuclear Deterrent, 29 June 2011, Column 50WS](#)

The Secretary of State for Defence (Dr Liam Fox): As part of his statement on the strategic defence and security review (SDSR) on 19 October 2010, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister said that we had reviewed our deterrence requirements and concluded that we could meet the requirement for an effective and credible deterrent with a smaller number of nuclear weapons and over the next few years would reduce the scale of the current deployed capability, incorporating this reduction into plans for the successor submarine. Therefore, we would reduce the number of warheads on board each submarine from a maximum of 48 to a maximum of 40, reduce the number of operational missiles in the VANGUARD class submarines to no more than eight, and reduce the number of operational warheads from fewer than 160 to no more than 120.

29 Jun 2011 : Column 51WS

I wish to inform the House that the programme for implementing the SDSR warhead reductions has commenced: at least one of the VANGUARD class ballistic missile submarines (SSBN) now carries a maximum of 40 nuclear warheads. The programme of work to complete these changes across the VANGUARD SSBN fleet will be completed within the constraints of the deterrent's operational programme. We currently expect completion to be made within this Parliament. The Government do not comment upon the operational programme and therefore updates on this implementation programme will not be given. I will update the House further once the changes have been completed across the current SSBN fleet and the SDSR commitment to reducing our stock of operationally deployed warheads has been fulfilled. On current plans, our expectation is that the subsequent reduction in our total stockpile to no more than 180 warheads will be completed by the mid 2020s. The early commencement of the programme for these reductions in warheads is a significant step and further demonstrates the Government's commitment to fulfilling the UK's disarmament obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. The Government remain committed to maintaining the minimum credible deterrent necessary to achieve our deterrence objectives of guaranteeing national security.

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmhansrd/cm110704/text/110704w0004.htm> - column 1052W *Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Submarines, 4 July 2011, Column 1052W*

Caroline Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the number of warheads deployed on each Vanguard class submarine will be reduced to no more than 40; when the stockpile of operationally available warheads will be reduced to no more than 120; and when warheads which have been removed from the operation stockpile will be dismantled. [20822]

Dr Fox: I will write to the hon. Member.

Substantive answer from Liam Fox to Caroline Lucas:

I undertook to write to you in response to your Parliamentary Question on 20 December 2010 (Official Report, column 992W) about the timescales for the reduction in the number of operationally available warheads and their eventual dismantlement

I apologise for the delay in responding but it was necessary to undertake some work to implement the first stage of this process before I was in a position to respond to your question. In addition, can I draw your attention to the Statement I made on 29 June 2011 (Official Report, column 51 WS).

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) announced a reduction in the scale of the UK nuclear deterrent. The programme to implement the reductions in the number of deployed warheads has now commenced on our fleet of VANGUARD class ballistic missile submarines. On current estimates, the reduction in operationally available warheads will be completed within this Parliament. Our expectation is that the programme for dismantling warheads removed from the operational stockpile will be completed within the timeframe set by the SDSR of the mid 2020s.

[Written answers to questions, Defence, Nuclear Weapons, 4 July 2011, Column 1053W](#)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the logistics plan for implementing the reduction in nuclear weapons numbers announced in the strategic defence and security review to be completed; when it is intended to commence the return of warheads to the Atomic Weapons Establishment for decommissioning; and when the reduction in stockpile size will be complete. [47825]

Dr Fox: I will write to the hon. Member.

Substantive answer from Liam Fox to Angus Robertson:

I undertook to write to you in response to your Parliamentary Question on 23 March 2011 (Official Report, column 1125W) about the timescales for the reduction in the number of operationally available warheads and their eventual dismantlement.

I apologise for the delay in responding but it was necessary to undertake some work to implement the first stage of this process before I was in a position to respond to your question. In addition, can I draw your attention to the Statement I made on 29 June 2011 (Official Report, column 51 WS).

The Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) announced a reduction in the scale of the UK nuclear deterrent. The programme to implement the reductions in the number of deployed warheads has now commenced on our fleet of VANGUARD class ballistic missile submarines. On current estimates, the reduction in operationally available warheads will be completed within this Parliament. Our expectation is that the programme for dismantling warheads removed from the operational stockpile will be completed within the timeframe set by the SDSR of the mid 2020s.

[House of Commons, Written Answers to Questions, Trident Missiles, 19 July 2011, Column 869W](#)

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 29 June 2011, *Official Report*, column 50WS, on nuclear deterrent, whether any multilateral verification provisions have been put in place in relation to the warhead reduction programme on Vanguard class submarines. [65179]

19 July 2011 : Column 870W

Dr Fox: No. However, as a responsible nuclear weapon state party to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the UK continues to pursue multilateral progress towards mutual, balanced, and verifiable reductions in nuclear weapons worldwide.

[House of Commons Debate, Defence, Trident Submarines, 6 July 2011, Column 1294W](#)

Mr Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the potential savings to the public purse arising from a reduction in the number of operational warheads on the Vanguard class submarines to no more than 120. [63656]

Nick Harvey: We are reducing the number of operational warheads to demonstrate our commitment to maintaining only the minimum nuclear deterrent necessary. The resulting financial saving was not a factor in this decision, however we do expect to save some tens of millions of pounds over the next 10 years. This contributes to the overall £1.2 billion of savings on the deterrent programme identified in the strategic defence and security review.

UK & Middle East WMD Free Zone

[House of Lords, Written answers, Weapons of Mass Destruction, 21 June 2011, Column 298W](#)
Question Asked by Lord Judd

To ask Her Majesty's Government what action they are taking in response to the 1995 resolution calling for a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East, to ensure that the 2012 conference which the Non-Proliferation Treaty signatory states agreed in New York on 28 May 2010 should be convened takes place and that the required host government and facilitator are designated in collaboration with the United Nations Security Council.[HL9760]

The Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Lord Howell of Guildford): The UK has been in close contact with the US and Russian colleagues- the co-sponsors of the (1995) resolution- to take forward appointing a facilitator and a host country for a conference in 2012, as set out in the final document of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference of 2010. We are also consulting the UN Secretary-General, regional states and agencies which have an important role to play. The EU seminar on a weapons of mass destruction-free zone in the Middle East in early July will be a useful chance to engage with key stakeholders.

[Iran, Israel and Arabs trade barbs at EU nuclear meeting](#)

Julian Borger's Blog, The Guardian, 11 July 2011

'The other big disappointment was that Gary Samore, President Obama's advisor on nuclear disarmament and proliferation, did not show up to make his scheduled keynote speech. He pleaded commitments back in Washington, but it was hardly the show of support from Washington that the idea of a WMD-free zone needs if it is to survive... There are now serious doubts whether a formal conference on the issue can be arranged, as agreed at [last year's NPT Review Conference in New York](#), in time for next year. The US argues that the host government should also provide an international 'facilitator' for the conference, but that cuts down the choice of facilitator.'

3) Proliferation challenges

Iran sanctions

[Oral Answers to Questions/Statement by Foreign Secretary, Africa and the Middle East, 7 June 2011, Column 34](#)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr William Hague): There must also be no let-up in our efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation in the middle east. Iran is combining brutal suppression of Opposition leaders at home with the provision of equipment and technical advice to help the Syrian regime to crush protests in Syria. This is unacceptable, and compounds our concern about Iran's behaviour and its intentions over its nuclear programme. We support peaceful pressure on Iran to persuade it to negotiate, backed by the offer by the UK, the US, Russia, China, France and Germany to reach an agreement through talks. That is why the UK has recently helped to extend Iran sanctions in the EU, with over 100 new designations, while keeping the door open to further negotiations. Until Iran negotiates seriously, international pressure against it will only increase.

[House of Commons, Oral Answers to questions, Middle East and North Africa, 7 June 2011, Column 49](#)

James Morris (Halesowen and Rowley Regis) (Con): Does the Foreign Secretary agree that given all that is going on in the middle east, it is more vital than ever that the international community should take any means necessary to prevent Iran from getting a viable nuclear weapon?

Mr Hague: The way I would put it is that it is important to intensify the peaceful and legitimate pressure on Iran to turn it away from its nuclear programme. As I set out in my statement, we have secured in the past two weeks the designation of more than 100 additional entities in Iran that are in various ways engaged or associated with the nuclear programme. We are looking to other countries to intensify the pressure and we discussed this a great deal with President Obama and Secretary Clinton on their visit here a couple of weeks ago. We will continue to intensify that policy. This is of prime concern to the security of the region and the world.

Hague response to Iranian missile tests

[Iran testing missiles that could carry nuclear weapon, UK's Hague says](#)

CNN, 29 June 2011

'Iran has been carrying out covert tests of missiles capable of delivering a nuclear payload, UK Foreign Secretary William Hague said Wednesday, in contravention of a U.N. resolution. It has also said it wants to enrich uranium to "levels far greater than is needed for peaceful nuclear energy," Hague

said... His comments in the House of Commons come a day after Iranian news agencies reported that the country's military had successfully test-fired 14 missiles during military drills, as part of a week of war games.'

[*Prime Minister's Questions/Statement by Foreign Secretary, Africa and the Middle East, 29 June 2011, Column 960*](#)

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr William Hague): Iran continues to connive in the suppression of legitimate protest in Syria and to suppress protests at home. I therefore welcome the European Council's decision to sanction three senior commanders of the Islamic revolutionary guards corps. Iran has also been carrying out covert ballistic missile tests and rocket launches, including testing missiles capable of delivering a nuclear payload in contravention of UN resolution 1929 and it has announced that it intends to triple its capacity to produce 20%-enriched uranium. These are enrichment levels far greater than is needed for peaceful nuclear energy. We will maintain and continue to increase pressure on Iran to negotiate an agreement on its nuclear programme, building on the strengthening of sanctions I announced to the House earlier this month.

[*Prime Minister's Questions/Statement by Foreign Secretary, Africa and the Middle East, 29 June 2011, Column 973*](#)

Stephen Metcalfe (South Basildon and East Thurrock) (Con): I welcome my right hon. Friend's remarks, particularly concerning Iran and its nuclear ambitions. What further actions or sanctions can he take to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapons programme, which would undoubtedly lead to greater instability in the middle east, and potentially to conflict?

Mr Hague: No one can be sure whether sanctions will of themselves prevent a nuclear programme, but last year, as we announced a succession of sanctions, the readiness of the regime in Tehran to negotiate increased, at least for a time. The regime will have to reckon on the fact that pressure from sanctions will intensify over the coming months unless it is prepared to negotiate about its nuclear programme. All that I can say to my hon. Friend for the moment is that we agreed in the EU last month the designation of 100 more individuals and entities, which will intensify the sanctions. I have referred today to additional sanctions on the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps commanders. We will continue to step up that pressure, but it will be peaceful and legitimate pressure.

More sanctions

[Iranian officials put on travel blacklist by UK, US and Canada](#)

Saeed Kamali Dehghan, The Guardian, 8 July 2011

'Britain, the US and Canada have approved a new round of travel restrictions targeting the Iranian regime, including members of the judiciary and prison officials. The British foreign secretary, William Hague, said on Friday that the punitive measures were aimed at individuals associated with Iran's nuclear programme as well as those involved in the violation of human rights in the country. "The UK is working closely with its partners to prevent a wide range of individuals connected with Iran's nuclear enrichment and weaponisation programmes from entering our countries. These include scientists, engineers and those procuring components," Hague said in a statement.'

[*Oral Answers to questions, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Topical questions, 19 July 2011, Column 790*](#)

Ian Austin (Dudley North) (Lab): The development of nuclear weapons by Iran would not just trigger a middle eastern arms race, but would make it much more difficult to prevent Ahmadinejad from arming terrorists in the region. He is persisting with the illegal enrichment of uranium and continuing to call for Israel's destruction, and has recently unveiled new missiles capable of reaching Israel. What more can the United Kingdom Government do to prevent Iran from acquiring those weapons?

Alistair Burt: The hon. Gentleman is right about the concerns that the world shares about the development of Iran's nuclear programme, on the subject of which it is being deliberately opaque. New sanctions were introduced only two weeks ago in relation to targeted individuals. The pressure of sanctions will continue from the world, and the determination of the world to see the nuclear programme opened to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has already expressed its concern, will continue until such time as Iran turns away from what appears to be a very dangerous course.