

Defence is the first duty of any Government

The role of our nuclear weapons is to deter the most extreme threats our nation might face

Not just now, but those that might emerge in the decades to come

Abandoning our nuclear deterrent would undermine our security and that of our allies

We are safer with nuclear weapons than without

THREAT



Arms control activities have been successful in slowing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, there continue to be states trying to develop nuclear capabilities, and there are around 17,000 nuclear weapons in the world today



A major direct threat to the UK or our NATO Allies might re-emerge. A state's intent in relation to the use or threat of use of existing capabilities can change overnight



Our nuclear deterrent should influence the decision-making of any state that might consider transferring nuclear weapons or nuclear technology to terrorists

AN INDEPENDENT AND ASSURED DETERRENT



Entirely sovereign to the UK, only the Prime Minister can authorise the launch of nuclear weapons



UK submarines operate readily without the Global Positioning System (GPS) and operate in isolation - the Trident missile does not use GPS



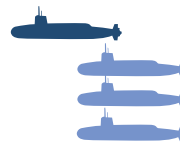
The UK deterrent will retain the capability to deter the most extreme threats from anywhere in the world



We need an invulnerable and undetectable system, which allows us to maintain a minimum credible deterrent



In order for our nuclear deterrent to be effective, we need to make sure it is not vulnerable to pre-emptive action



Since 1969 there has always been at least one of four nuclear-armed submarines undetected on a Continuous at Sea Deterrent patrol

TREATIES AND DISARMAMENT



The UK is a responsible nuclear weapon state committed to the long term goal of a world without nuclear weapons in line with our nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations



We possess around 1% of the total global stockpile of approx 17,000 nuclear weapons



We have reduced the operational alert status of our submarines on patrol to several days' notice to fire




We do not target our missiles at any state




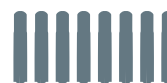
Since 2010 we have:




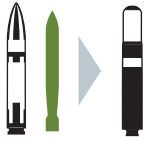
 reduced the number of warheads onboard each submarine from 48 to 40



 reduced our requirement for operationally available warheads to no more than 120



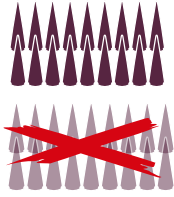
 reduced the number of operational missiles on each submarine to not more than eight



The UK is the only declared nuclear weapon state which has reduced its nuclear deterrent capability to a single weapon system



The investment required to maintain our deterrent will not come at the expense of the conventional capabilities our armed forces need



We have reduced our nuclear forces by over half from their Cold War peak in the late 1970s and will reduce the overall stockpile to no more than 180 warheads by the mid 2020s



Having three nuclear powers in NATO - the UK, France and the US - and thus three centres of decision making, enhances our security

COST



The Trident Alternatives Review in 2013 demonstrated that no other system is as capable as the current Trident-based deterrent, or as cost-effective



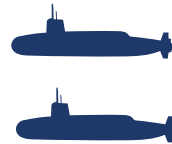
Maintaining a minimum nuclear deterrent is fully consistent with all our international legal obligations



A decision to give up our nuclear deterrent would, for political and technical and industrial reasons, be very difficult to reverse



Our estimate is that the four submarines will cost £31 billion to build. We have also set a contingency of £10 billion on top. This is spread over some 35 years and equates to 0.2% per year of Government spending



If we ceased continuous deterrent patrols, we could be deterred or prevented from deploying an SSBN in a crisis



In-service costs of the UK's nuclear deterrent will be similar to those of today - around 6% of the Defence budget



A move from a dormant nuclear deterrent programme towards an active one could be seen as escalatory



An agreement signed in 1963 allows the UK to reduce costs by sharing procurement of Trident missiles and other components with the US while maintaining full operational independence



Short and medium range aircraft or missiles (including cruise missiles) lack sufficient range and would be vulnerable to pre-emptive attacks or to interception by air defence systems

MYTHS AND DISCUSSION POINTS



The nuclear deterrent isn't intended to deter terrorists. The UK has policies and capabilities to deal with the wide range of threats we currently face or might face in the future



It is unlikely there will be any radical technological breakthrough which might diminish materially the current advantages of the submarine or make the oceans transparent. In any event, we judge that a submarine will remain by far the least vulnerable of all the platform options



Nuclear weapons remain a necessary element of defence capability as we need to deter threats from others possessing nuclear weapons - conventional forces alone cannot deliver the same deterrent effect



Only the UK, the US and France in NATO can maintain nuclear weapons under the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Other signatories are prohibited from developing them by law