



Future of the British Nuclear Deterrent – Suggested Reading on Trident

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The debate over the renewal of the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent beyond the 2020s has been prevalent since the Labour government published its White Paper, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent* in December 2006.

The commitment to replace Trident with a submarine-based deterrent system was reiterated in the 2010 Strategic Defence and Security Review and in May 2011 the Trident Successor programme passed its Initial Gate and is now in its assessment phase. Main Gate on the programme is scheduled for 2016.

The 2010 Coalition Agreement, however, made provision for the Liberal Democrats to continue to make the case for alternatives to the like-for-like replacement of Trident. In 2011 a Review of Alternatives, to be led by the Cabinet office, was therefore launched. That review reported in July 2013.

The following is a list of suggested reading material which provides background on the decision to replace the nuclear deterrent, the international legal context for such a decision, the current debate on financial and political viability of the successor programme, and the potential alternatives to a submarine-based deterrent, including the outcome of the recent Cabinet Office review. It also includes material that discusses the future of Trident in the event that Scotland votes in favour of independence in 2014.

This note may be read in conjunction with House of Commons Library Note [Update on the Trident Successor Programme](#), SN06526, which examines the progress that has been made on the Successor programme. It also looks at wider issues such as the Trident Alternatives Review and the potential impact of the Scottish referendum on independence in September 2014.

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1 Department of Information Services and Lords Library Publications

Library Research Papers

- RP11/10, [UK Defence and Security Policy: A New Approach?](#), January 2011
- RP 10/42, [Progress Towards Nuclear Disarmament](#), June 2010
- RP09/92, [The Islamic Republic of Iran: an Introduction](#), 11 December 2009
- RP 06/53, [The Future of the British Nuclear Deterrent](#), November 2006

Library Standard Notes

- SN06526, [Update on the Trident Successor Programme](#), June 2014
- SN06222, [Is Iran building a nuclear weapon?](#), March 2012
- SN05757, [Trident after the Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), June 2011
- SN05915, [In brief: North Korea Update](#), 24 March 2011
- SN05750, [Franco-British Defence Co-operation](#), November 2010
- SN/IA/5150, [Future of the British Nuclear Deterrent: A Progress Report](#), 21 September 2010
- SN/IA/5275, [Iran's Nuclear Programme, and Sanctions](#), 13 October 2010
- SN/IA/4079, [The French Nuclear Deterrent](#), 1 July 2010
- SN/IA/5024, [Recent Developments at the Atomic Weapons Establishment](#), March 2009

Older Notes:¹

- SN/IA/4262, *Iran's Nuclear Programme: an Overview*, September 2007
- SN/IA/4327, *Trident and the Future of the British Nuclear Deterrent: Frequently Asked Questions*, April 2007
- SN/IA/4199, *In Brief: The Trident White Paper*, March 2007

POST Notes

- [Managing the UK plutonium stockpile](#), February 2005

House of Lords Library Notes

- LLN 2013/001, [Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament](#), January 2013
- LLN 2010/002, [Prospects for Nuclear Disarmament and Strengthening Non-Proliferation](#), January 2010

2 Government Publications (Including FOI releases)

- Ministry of Defence, [The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2013 Update to Parliament](#), December 2013
- [Trident Alternatives Review](#), July 2013
- Ministry of Defence, [The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2012 Update to Parliament](#), December 2012
- Ministry of Defence, [The UK's Future Nuclear Deterrent: Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report](#), May 2011
- Ministry of Defence, [Trident Alternatives Study – terms of reference](#), May 2011
- [Securing Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), October 2010
- [A Strong Britain in an Age of Uncertainty: The National Security Strategy](#), October 2010
- SDSR Factsheet 10: [Trident Value for Money Review](#), October 2010
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Nuclear 2010: Background to the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](#), April 2010
- Cabinet Office, [The Road to 2010: Addressing the Nuclear Question in the Twenty First Century](#), Cm 7675, Session 2008-09
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office, [Lifting the Nuclear Shadow: Creating the Conditions for Abolishing Nuclear Weapons](#), February 2009

¹ Please contact the International Affairs and Defence Section in the House of Commons Library for a copy of these briefings.

- Ministry of Defence and Foreign and Commonwealth Office, *The Future of the United Kingdom's Nuclear Deterrent*, Cm 6994, Session 2006-07
- Ministry of Defence, *Historical Accounting for UK Defence Highly Enriched Uranium*, March 2006
- Ministry of Defence, *Documents dealing with the Replacement of Polaris with Trident* (disclosed 28 November 2005), including:
 - Defence Open Government Document 80/23, *The Future UK Strategic Nuclear Deterrent Force*
 - Defence Open Government Document 82/1, *UK Trident Programme*²
 - Defence Open Government Document 87/01, *Trident and the alternatives: modernising the UK strategic Nuclear Deterrent Force*.
- Ministry of Defence, *Control of the UK nuclear arsenal*, (Disclosed 19 July 2005)

3 Government Speeches and Statements in Parliament

Current Government (2010 -):

- [Written Statement on the Trident Alternatives Review](#), 16 July 2013
- [Written Statement on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation](#), 21 May 2013
- [Backbench Debate on the Renewal of Trident](#), 17 January 2013
- [Written Statement on Nuclear Disarmament](#), 9 July 2012
- [Correction on Statement on contract for nuclear powered submarines](#), 26 June 2012
- [Statement on contract for nuclear powered submarines](#), 18 June 2012
- [Statement on contract for assessment phase of successor submarine programme](#), 22 May 2012
- [Written Statement on the Atomic Weapons Establishment](#), 14 May 2012
- [Statement on HMS Vengeance \(Long Overhaul Period\)](#), 26 March 2012
- [Written Statement on Nuclear Disarmament](#), 15 September 2011
- [Written Statement on the Nuclear Deterrent](#), 29 June 2011
- [Statement on the Nuclear Deterrent](#), 18 May 2011
- [Statement on the Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), 19 October 2010
- Speech by Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox MP at Chatham House, *Deterrence in the 21st Century*, 13 July 2010

² Please contact the International Affairs and Defence Section for a copy of this paper.

- Speech by Secretary of State for Defence, Dr Liam Fox MP at RUSI, [Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), 14 June 2010
- [Written Statement on the NPT Review Conference](#), 14 June 2010

Previous Government:

- [Written Statement on the Atomic Weapons Establishment](#), 9 September 2009
- Written Statement on [Nuclear Non-Proliferation](#), HC Deb 16 July 2009
- Speech by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, [Nuclear Energy and Proliferation](#), 17 March 2009
- Address to the International Institute for Strategic Studies by former Foreign Secretary, David Miliband,, [Nuclear Non-Proliferation](#), 4 February 2009
- Speech by former Defence Secretary, Des Browne to the Conference of Disarmament in Geneva, [Laying the Foundations for Multilateral Disarmament](#), 5 February 2008
- Speech by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown at the Chamber of Commerce in Delhi, [Nuclear Disarmament](#), 21 January 2008
- Speech by former Foreign Secretary, Margaret Beckett, to the Carnegie International Non-Proliferation Conference, [A world free of nuclear weapons?](#), June 2007
- [Written Statement on the Deterrent White Paper](#), 12 March 2007
- [Statement on Trident](#), 4 December 2006

4 Parliamentary Material³

2013-2014 Session

- EDM 51, [Defence Review 2015 and Trident Replacement](#)
- EDM 37, [Trident Replacement](#)
- [Commons Debate on the Trident Alternatives Review](#), 16 July 2013
- [Westminster Hall Debate on the Non-Proliferation Treaty](#), 20 June 2013
- EDM 1237, [Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Initiatives](#)
- EDM 150, [Trident Replacement](#)
- Defence Select Committee, *Sixth report - Defence Implications of Possible Scottish Independence*, [HC 198](#), [HC 198-II](#)

³ This information does not include parliamentary oral or written questions, which amount to several hundred over the period covered.

- Defence Select Committee, *9th Special Report - The Defence Implications of Possible Scottish Independence: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2013-14*, [HC 839](#)

2012-2013 Session

- Westminster hall Debate, [Scottish Referendum \(Trident\)](#), 7 March 2013
- [House of Lords debate on Nuclear Disarmament](#), 24 January 2013
- EDM 1131, [Cost of Nuclear Deterrence](#)
- EDM 753, [Trident Alternatives Review](#)
- EDM 230, [Nuclear Weapon-Free Wales](#)
- EDM 96, [Trident replacement](#)
- Scottish Affairs Select Committee, *The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: Terminating Trident – Days or Decades*, [HC 676](#)
- Scottish Affairs Select Committee, *The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: Terminating Trident – Days or Decades, Government Response*, [HC 861](#)

2010-2012 Session

- Scottish Affairs Select Committee, *The Referendum on Separation for Scotland: Unanswered Questions*, [HC 1806](#)
- Defence Select Committee, *The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy*, [HC 761](#)
- Defence Select Committee, *The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy: Volume II*, [HC 761](#)
- Defence Select Committee, *The Strategic Defence and Security Review and the National Security Strategy: Government Response*, [HC 1639](#)
- EDM 1987, [Nuclear Non-Proliferation](#)
- EDM 1924, [Trident Review](#)
- EDM 1477, [Trident Submarine Proposals](#)
- EDM 937, [Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and Trident](#)
- EDM 909, [Trident Replacement](#)
- EDM 498, [Nuclear Weapons Convention](#)
- [Westminster Hall Debate on Trident](#), 7 December 2011
- [Westminster Hall Debate on Trident](#), 1 March 2011
- Lords Debate on the [Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), 12 November 2010

- Commons debate on [Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), 4 November 2010
- Backbench Business Debate on the [Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), 16 September 2010
- Defence Select Committee, [Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), HC 345. The Government's response to this report is also available [online](#).
- EDM 110, [Trident and the Strategic Defence and Security Review](#)
- [Debate on the Strategic Defence and Security Review](#), HC Deb 21 June 2010, c52-134

2009-2010 Session

- [Westminster Hall debate on Global Security \(Non-proliferation\)](#), 4 March 2010
- [House of Lords debate on Nuclear Disarmament](#), 21 January 2010
- Foreign Affairs Committee, [Global Security: UK-US Relations, Response to the Committee's Sixth report of Session 2009-10](#), HC 537
- Foreign Affairs Committee, [Global Security: UK-US Relations](#), HC 114
- EDM 1116, [Nuclear Disarmament Aspiration and the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference](#)
- EDM 588, [UK Nuclear Weapons and the Non-Proliferation Treaty](#)
- EDM 380, [Trident Replacement](#)
- EDM 144, [Negotiating a Nuclear Weapons Convention](#)
- EDM 37, [Nuclear Arms Reduction and Trident Replacement](#)

2008-2009 Session

- Foreign Affairs Committee, [Global Security: Non-Proliferation, Response of the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs](#), Cm 7692
- Foreign Affairs Committee, [Global Security: Non-Proliferation](#), HC 222
- [Treasury Minutes on the Fourth to the Sixth, the Eighth to the Eleventh and the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts 2008-09](#), Cm 7622
- Committee of Public Accounts, [The United Kingdom's Future Deterrent Capability](#), HC 250
- [Westminster Hall Debate on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](#), 11 November 2009
- [Debate on Nuclear Weapons Proliferation](#), 9 July 2009
- [Lords Debate on Nuclear Proliferation](#), 26 March 2009
- EDM 1840, [Trident Renewal and the Strategic Defence Review](#)

- EDM 1825, [Nuclear Arms Reduction](#)
- EDM 1523, [Trident Replacement](#)
- EDM 1422, [Replacement of Trident Missiles](#)
- EDM 1290, [Nuclear Disarmament and Relations with the United States](#)
- EDM 1282, [Nuclear Weapons Convention](#)
- EDM 891, [Nuclear Disarmament](#)
- EDM 660, [Parliamentary Scrutiny of Trident Replacement](#)
- EDM 511, [Replacement of Trident](#)
- EDM 498, [Trident](#)
- EDM 407, [Trident Missile Replacement](#)
- EDM 367, [Nuclear Non-Proliferation and a Nuclear Free World](#)
- EDM 277, [UK Role in Global Nuclear Disarmament](#)

2007-2008 Session

- National Audit Office, [The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent Capability](#), HC 1115
- EDM 2053, [Nuclear Security project](#)
- EDM 1941, [Nuclear Weapons Free World](#)
- EDM 1165, [Nuclear Warhead Construction at the Atomic Weapons Establishment](#)
- EDM 892, [Global Summit for a Nuclear Weapon Free World](#)
- EDM 72, [Nuclear Weapons Convention](#)

2006-2007 Session

- [Debate on the Motion to support the Government's decisions as set out in Cm 6994 to maintain the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent](#) (HC Deb 14 March 2007, c298-407)
- Defence Select Committee, [The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: The White Paper: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session, 2006/07](#), HC 551
- Defence Select Committee, [The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: The White Paper](#), HC 225-I
- Defence Select Committee, [The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: The White Paper: Oral and written evidence](#), HC 225-II

- Defence Select Committee, *The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Manufacturing and Skills Base: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2006/07*, HC 304
- Defence Select Committee, *The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Manufacturing and Skills Base*, HC 59
- Westminster Hall Debate on Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, 24 July 2007
- Lords debate on the Nuclear Deterrent, 24 January 2007
- EDM 1518, Non-Proliferation Treaty Review
- EDM 1185, Trident Consultation and Public Opposition
- EDM 1127, Nuclear Disarmament Commitments and Trident Renewal
- EDM 1106, Replacement of Trident
- EDM 1099, Cost of Trident
- EDM 1017, Prime Minister and National Security
- EDM 798, Future of Trident and the Process of Global Nuclear Disarmament
- EDM 579, Consultation on Trident
- EDM 361, Trident
- EDM 323, Timing of Trident Decision
- EDM 239, Trident Missile System
- EDM 219, Alternatives to Nuclear Weapons

2005-2006 Session

- Defence Select Committee, *The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Strategic Context: Government response to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2005/06*, HC 1558
- Defence Select Committee, *The Future of the UK's Strategic Nuclear Deterrent: the Strategic Context*, HC 986
- EDM 2703, Parliamentary Debate on Trident
- EDM 2702, Trident (No.2)
- EDM 2694, Trident Missile System
- EDM 2652, Future of the UK Nuclear Deterrent
- EDM 2575, UK Nuclear Weapons
- EDM 1614, Trident and the Non-Proliferation Treaty

- EDM 1197, [Replacement for Trident Weapons](#)
- EDM 1113, [Trident](#)
- EDM 649, [Public Debate on Trident Replacement](#)
- EDM 149, [Future of the Nuclear Deterrent](#)
- EDM 129, [UK and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](#)

5 Books and Reports

- [The Trident Commission: an independent, cross party inquiry to examine UK nuclear weapons policy](#), BASIC 1 July 2014
- Hugh Chalmers, [The bang behind the buck: Replacing the UK's nuclear warheads](#), RUSI Occasional Paper, March 2014
- [People not Trident: the economic case against Trident replacement](#), Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, March 2014
- [The UK's National Defence Needs and International Nuclear Disarmament Responsibilities](#), Nuclear Education Trust, February 2014
- Hugh Chalmers, [A disturbance in the force: debating Continuous-at-sea Deterrence](#), RUSI Occasional Paper, January 2014
- Hugh Chalmers, [The Risks and Rewards of alternative approaches to Trident](#), RUSI Analysis, 23 July 2013
- Dr Nick Ritchie and Paul Ingram, [Trident in UK Politics and Public Opinion](#), BASIC, July 2013
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- [Defence and Security in an Independent Scotland](#), The Scotland Institute, June 2013
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- John Simpson, [Deterrence, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and UK Trident](#), Discussion Paper 4 of the BASIC Trident Commission, March 2013
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- [Disarming Trident](#), Scottish Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, June 2012
- Keith Hartley, [Defence-Industrial Issues: Employment, Skills, Technology and Regional Impact](#), Discussion Paper 2 of the BASIC Trident Commission, March 2012

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- Toby Fenwick, [Dropping the bomb: a post Trident future](#), Centre Forum, March 2012
- [Trident: Nowhere to go](#), Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, January 2012
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