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RE: Covid-19 and Continuous At Sea Deterrent

The increasing cost of Coronavirus will require decades to recover. Meanwhile, the UK's Trident nuclear weapon system remains on Continuous At Sea Deterrent patrol costing some £2 billion a year and using scarce military assets to protect the on-patrol submarine. This is despite Trident missiles having been de-targeted since 1994 and stood down at 'several days' notice to fire (HMG website) since 1998. Furthermore, recent public statements by the Chairs of the Defence Select and Public Accounts Committees advise that two out of four Vanguard class submarines that carry Trident missiles have been unavailable for more than a year, placing what must be considerable strain on the remaining two (normally three) submarine crews now having to carry out patrols of up to four months at a time. The morale of the submarine crew on patrol, understandably worried about their families at home and knowing their weapon system is stood down, must be a concern, as is their own state of health and exposure to the virus.

In these circumstances, and lacking any foreseeable threat of a 'bolt from the blue' nuclear weapon attack on the UK, is it appropriate for the Government to continue spending billions of pounds on Continuous at Sea Deterrent, as well as building new nuclear warheads and the submarines to carry them?

Yours sincerely,

Commander Robert Forsyth RN (Ret'd)
2nd in Command Polaris submarine, commanded two other submarines and the Commanding Officer's Qualifying Course

Commander Robert Green RN (Ret'd)
Former nuclear-armed aircraft bombardier-navigator, Staff Officer (Intelligence) to CINFLEET in Falklands War

Commander Colin Tabeart RN (Ret'd)
Former Senior Engineer Officer, Polaris submarine

Rt Hon Ian Blackford MP
Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber, SNP Westminster Group Leader

Lord Green of Deddington

Professor Nick Grief
Kent Law School and Doughty Street International

Canon Christopher Hall
Church of England General Synod 1972-1985, speaker in 'Church and the Bomb' debate 1985

Dr Nick Ritchie
Senior Lecturer, University of York

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Angie Zelter
Public Interest Case Against Trident

Note

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