



House of Commons  
Defence Committee

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**Ministry of Defence  
Main Estimates 2006–07:  
Government Response  
to the Committee's  
Ninth Report of Session  
2005–06**

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**Tenth Special Report of Session 2005–06**

*Ordered by The House of Commons  
to be printed 10 October 2006*

**HC 1601**  
Published on 13 October 2006  
by authority of the House of Commons  
London: The Stationery Office Limited  
£0.00

## The Defence Committee

The Defence Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Ministry of Defence and its associated public bodies.

### Current membership

Rt Hon James Arbuthnot MP (*Conservative, North East Hampshire*) (Chairman)  
Mr David S Borrow MP (*Labour, South Ribble*)  
Mr David Crausby MP (*Labour, Bolton North East*)  
Linda Gilroy MP (*Labour, Plymouth Sutton*)  
Mr David Hamilton MP (*Labour, Midlothian*)  
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Mr Mark Lancaster MP (*Conservative, North East Milton Keynes*)  
Willie Rennie MP (*Liberal Democrat, Dunfermline and West Fife*)  
John Smith MP (*Labour, Vale of Glamorgan*)

The following Members were also Members of the Committee during the Parliament.

Mr Colin Breed MP (*Liberal Democrat, South East Cornwall*)  
Derek Conway MP (*Conservative, Old Bexley and Sidcup*)  
Mr Desmond Swayne MP (*Conservative, New Forest West*)

### Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the Internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

### Publications

The Reports and evidence of the Committee are published by The Stationery Office by Order of the House. All publications of the Committee (including press notices) are on the Internet at:

[www.parliament.uk/defcom](http://www.parliament.uk/defcom)

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Philippa Helme (Clerk), Eliot Wilson (Second Clerk), Ian Rogers (Audit Adviser), Stephen Jones (Committee Specialist), Adrian Jenner (Inquiry Manager), Richard Dawson (Committee Assistant), Sheryl Dinsdale (Secretary) and Stewart McIlvenna (Senior Office Clerk).

### Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Defence Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5745; the Committee's email address is [defcom@parliament.uk](mailto:defcom@parliament.uk). Media inquiries should be addressed to Alex Paterson on 020 7219 1589.

# Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2006–07

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The Defence Committee published its Ninth Report of Session 2005–06 on the Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2006–07 on 29 June 2006, as House of Commons paper HC 1366. The Government's response to this report was received on 12 September 2006. This is appended below.

## Appendix: Government Response

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1. The Government welcomes the Committee's report on the Ministry of Defence Main Estimates 2006–07 published on 29 June 2006. The Estimate sought Parliamentary approval for the MOD's core budget for 2006–07. This did not include the cost of operations, which the Department will seek later in the year, in the Winter Supplementary Estimates. The Government's response to the conclusions and recommendations contained in the Committee's report is set out below.

**We recommend that the Ministry of Defence reconsider whether provision for commenced operations might be included in the Main Estimates in future. The current arrangements mean that the provision for conflict prevention in the MoD's Main Estimate greatly underestimates the total expected cost of the MoD's conflict prevention activities. (Paragraph 13)**

2. Requests for resources for Conflict Prevention have normally been made in the Supplementary Estimates, because costs are difficult to forecast in fast moving operational circumstances. The Department will seek provision for Conflict Prevention for commenced operations in our 2006/7 Winter Supplementary Estimate.

**While we appreciate the value in managing peace-keeping activities centrally, we cannot see why this should preclude separation of the anticipated costs of operations in the Balkans by department in the Main Estimates. We recommend that the Government reconsider this. (Paragraph 12)**

3. The Government will reconsider this in the preparation of Main Estimates 2007/8.

**We recommend that the MoD consider further, in consultation with this Committee and with the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit, how the information presented in its estimates memoranda could be made more accessible, and expressed in plainer language. (Paragraph 16)**

4. The Department will consult with the House of Commons Scrutiny Unit and the Committee on how the information presented in the Estimates memoranda can be expressed in plainer language.

**We believe it is essential to our future security that the MoD and our Armed Forces are properly funded and we will be monitoring the progress of the Spending Review with very close interest. We will also be continuing to monitor the MoD's Estimates process. The Government should not take the House's acquiescence to its spending plans for granted. (Paragraph 18)**

5. The Department agrees that it is essential that the MOD and Armed Forces are properly funded and notes and welcomes the Committee's interest. The Government does not take the House's acquiescence to its spending plans for granted.