

users are able to exploit the power of the infrastructure in delivering their outputs, both in the fixed and in the deployed environment.

Those civilians employed in support roles for the current infrastructure will be transferred to the Delivery Partner (DP) under TUPE arrangements once the DP takes control of the management of the system that they support. It is expected that there will be some exceptions to this in order to provide support for systems that have operational or specialist constraints and require the retention of in house support staff. There will also be those who need to be retained to form the core of the Intelligent Customer Function (ICF). The MOD will be retaining Military Service Providers (MSPs) to support the infrastructure when it is deployed for military operations.

**Fire Study 2000**

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to begin the implementation of Fire Study 2000; and if he will make a statement. [179533]

**Mr. Ingram:** The future organisation of the Defence Fire Services is dependent upon the result of the Airfield Support Services Project (ASSP) which is examining the most cost effective way of delivering airfield support and wider fire services without compromising operational capability or safety. In the meantime, but without prejudice to the final outcome of ASSP, we are considering whether there is benefit in proceeding with the implementation of Fire Study 2000 separately. However, at present no decision on this matter has been made.

**Fisheries**

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many fisheries protection vessels are in operation; and where they operate. [180411]

**Mr. Ingram:** The RN Fishery Protection Squadron currently has three River Class patrol vessels and three Hunt Class MCMVs allocated to Fishery Protection duty, although the number of ships actually on patrol at any given time will depend on the level of fishing activity. Other RN ships can also be called upon to carry out Fishery Protection duties if so required.

The RN Fishery Protection Squadron patrols the areas within the British Fishery Limits around the English, Welsh, Northern Ireland, Isle of Man and Channel Island coasts. The RN also inspects British fishing vessels in international waters. The Scottish Fishery Protection Agency is responsible for patrolling the waters off the Scottish coast.

**Gaul**

**Mr. Austin Mitchell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what investigation has been made into the claim by former Chief Petty Officer Derek Barron regarding the sinking of the fishing vessel The Gaul in the Barents Sea in 1974. [179334]

**Mr. Ingram:** Investigation of Mr. Barron's claim is a matter for the Formal Inquiry into the sinking of the Gaul, which is being conducted by the Wreck

Commissioner. The Ministry of Defence is committed to giving every assistance to the Inquiry on this and on all other matters.

**Gibraltar Regiment**

**Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Gibraltar Regiment. [173373]

**Mr. Ingram:** I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave on 5 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1528W, to the hon. Member for Romford (Mr. Rosindell).

**Government Expenditure Plans**

**Mr. Soames:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Government's expenditure plans 2004-05 to 2005-06 will be published. [180561]

**Mr. Ingram:** We expect to publish the Government's Expenditure Plans for the Ministry of Defence 2004-05 to 2005-06 before the summer recess.

**Gulf War Syndrome**

**Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make it his policy to assist the Royal British Legion with the independent inquiry into Gulf War Syndrome. [179759]

**Mr. Caplin:** I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 22 June 2004, *Official Report*, column 1297W, to the hon. Member for North Cornwall (Mr. Tyler).

**Interrogation Techniques**

**Mr. McNamara:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he was first informed that UK forces in Iraq were practising the banned interrogation technique of hooding prisoners; if he will list the regiments in which the practice was identified; and on what date and on whose authority an order was issued to cease the practice. [174552]

**Mr. Ingram:** We are not aware of any incidents in which United Kingdom interrogators are alleged to have used hooding as an interrogation technique.

**Norman Baker:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what account he took of (a) the judgment of the European Court of Human Rights in *Ireland v. United Kingdom* to outlaw the use of the five techniques of interrogation found to be in breach of Article 3 of the European Convention and (b) the response of the then Government to that judgment in setting the parameters for conduct by British forces in Iraq in respect of individuals held. [179056]

**Mr. Ingram [holding answer 15 June 2004]:** I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 26 May 2004, *Official Report*, column 1693W, to my hon. Friend the Member for Hull, North (Mr. McNamara). This remains the Government position. It is made clear to all armed forces personnel undergoing training in interrogation that the five techniques, hooding, wall standing, sleep deprivation, food deprivation, and white noise, are in all circumstances unacceptable as methods of interrogation.