

(2) if he will list the subjects on which military officers spoke during the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism held on 3 and 4 November in London.

**Mr. Freeman:** The conference to which the hon. Member refers was organised by the *Defence and Foreign Affairs* magazine and the International Strategic Studies Association, and I am not, therefore, aware of the list of those invited to attend. I understand that, in the event, one United Kingdom military officer attended and spoke in general terms on certain aspects of special operations.

**Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what was the cost to public funds of the participation of military officers who attended the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism on 3 and 4 November;

(2) what was the cost to public funds of holding the international working conference on special military operations and counter-terrorism at the Honourable Artillery Company, Armoury House, City Road, London on 3 and 4 November.

**Mr. Freeman:** No cost of public funds was involved in holding the conference to which the hon. Member refers, beyond the expenses of the United Kingdom military officer who attended the conference. These amounted to about £45.

**Messrs. Robert Gaunt and David Walker**

**Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Robert Gaunt or David Walker have been employed as consultants in any capacity by Her Majesty's Government since 1979.

**Mr. Freeman:** On the basis of the information currently available to me I am not aware of any specific MOD contract with either of these gentlemen as consultants. If the hon. Member wishes to provide further information I will carry out a further check and write to him.

#### Defence and Foreign Affairs Group

**Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the occasions since 1979 on which military officers or civil servants have been invited to or have attended conferences organised by either or both of the Defence and Foreign Affairs Group and the International Strategic Studies Association.

**Mr. Freeman:** A serving officer attended a conference held jointly by Defence and Foreign Affairs and the International Strategic Studies Association in London on 3-4 November. Information on official attendance at previous conferences held by *Defence and Foreign Affairs* and the International Strategic Studies Association is not readily available and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

**Mr. Nellist** asked the Secretary of State for Defence if Her Majesty's Government pay any subscription or grant to the Defence and Foreign Affairs Group or the International Strategic Studies Association.

**Mr. Freeman:** The Ministry of Defence pays no grant to either the International Strategic Studies Association or *Defence and Foreign Affairs*. The Ministry of Defence library does, however, subscribe to various publications produced by the Defence and Foreign Affairs group.

#### Wintex '87

**Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether Wintex '87 will involve local authorities in civil defence planning at (a) the county level and (b) district level; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Douglas Hogg:** I have been asked to reply. No.

**Mr. Skinner** asked the Secretary of State for Defence whether the regional emergency committees will be convened during Wintex '87; and if he will make a statement.

**Dr. Boyson:** I have been asked to reply.

The Government plan to activate regional emergency committees during Wintex '87 next March.

#### Defence Scientific Advisory Council

**Mr. Strang** asked the Secretary of State for Defence how many academics or scientists from universities or other institutions of higher education sit on the Defence Scientific Advisory Council.

**Mr. Archie Hamilton** [pursuant to his reply, 19 November 1986, c. 224]: The Defence Scientific Advisory Council consists of an independent chairman, not more than 19 independent members and eight official members. Of the independent members, there are currently 12 from universities or higher education establishments.

#### SOCIAL SERVICES

##### Drug Abuse

**79. Mr. Lawler** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what future plans he has to continue to make young people aware of the dangers of drug abuse.

**Mrs. Currie:** During the course of the year we have been continuing and developing the campaign of education and information about drugs which we launched in 1985. This year's campaign involves:

- advertisements on television, radio and in the press (focusing both on young people and their parents);
- the provision of leaflets for parents, professionals and others;
- a video package for use with 12-15 year olds which we have made available free of charge to all secondary schools in England and Wales.

We shall shortly be evaluating the effects of this year's campaign of education and information and will consider how best further to develop the campaign in the light of the evaluation.

In addition, my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, is taking a range of initiatives to improve drugs education given in schools.

#### AIDS

**Mr. David Marshall** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services whether he will make acquired immune deficiency syndrome a notifiable disease.

**Mr. Newton:** I refer the hon. Member to my reply to my hon. Friend, the Member for Stockport (Mr. Favell) on 28 October 1986 at column 123.

**Mr. Arnold** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will outline the steps he proposes to take to combat acquired immune deficiency syndrome.



**Mr. Newton:** A full account will be given of the Government's plans in the debate on AIDS on 21 November.

**Mr. Kirkwood** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services what guidelines have been issued to ambulance personnel as regards dealing with acquired immune deficiency syndrome and suspected acquired immune deficiency syndrome sufferers; and if he will make a statement.

**Mr. Newton:** Guidelines have been issued to health authorities which have responsibility for the day-to-day operational management of ambulance services. In addition, officials have also specifically advised regional health authority ambulance officers through the Secretary of their uni-disciplinary group. Guidance was issued to health authorities in January 1985 (Circular HC(85)2) in the form of interim guidelines by my right hon. Friend's advisory committee on dangerous pathogens. Those guidelines contained advice on measures which should be taken to safeguard the health and safety of people who, because of their work, come into direct contact with patients who might be suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome. Revised guidelines were issued to health authorities in June 1986 (Circular HN(86)20). Copies of both circulars are in the Library.

**Dr. Godman** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will list those hospitals and clinics in England and Wales which have in-patient facilities for the treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome victims.

**Mr. Newton:** The wide spectrum of illnesses associated with the infection can be treated in normal district general hospital in-patient and out-patient facilities. Advice has been issued to all health authorities about the appropriate precautions to be taken in dealing with AIDS cases.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, when his Department first tested blood and blood products from the United States for HIV and when his Department first issued advice to (a) doctors and (b) health authorities about acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: Supplies of whole blood are not imported since the United Kingdom is self-sufficient; only certain blood products such as factor VIII are imported.

A suitable test for antibodies to HIV was developed during 1985. Since the beginning of 1986 it has been a licensing requirement that all imported factor VIII should be made from individually tested plasma donations. At the same time, as part of this licensing procedure, the National Institute of Biological Standards and Control started testing samples of each batch of imported factor VIII for HIV antibodies.

The Department first issued specific guidance documents on AIDS to health authorities in January 1985 and to all doctors in May 1985.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services, if he will list those hospitals offering blood tests for HIV, giving the number of people tested; and how many proved positive.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: HIV antibody tests are available in NHS genito-urinary medicine clinics of which there are 190 in England and Wales. Tests are also available through general practitioners and in the private sector. Laboratories testing the blood samples report only positive test results to the Communicable Disease Surveillance centre. At the end of October 1986, 3,590 positive test results had been reported.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when the Government first financed research into the causes and treatment of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: The Medical Research Council, which receives grant in aid from the Science Vote of the Department of Education and Science, is responsible for co-ordinating research on AIDS in the United Kingdom. I understand that the first special project grant was awarded in 1983.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will make a statement on the British Government's contacts with the World Health Organisation or other Governments on the subject of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986 c. 78]: The Government have taken an active part in discussions on AIDS at the WHO European regional committee meetings in 1985 and 1986 and at the World Health assembly this year.

They have also participated in WHO expert committees on AIDS and have been involved in discussions on the WHO AIDS programme. The Government have pledged £250,000 to the programme. There was also discussion of the matter at the recent meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers.

British Embassies and High Commissions generally have been asked to report on major developments in respect of AIDS.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) when his Department first became aware of acquired immune deficiency syndrome;

(2) when his Department first became aware that acquired immune deficiency syndrome was a sexually transmitted disease.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: First reports about the disease were received from America in 1981 and the first case of AIDS in the United Kingdom was diagnosed at the end of that year. The possibility that AIDS could be sexually transmitted was suggested at that time. Following the isolation of the causative virus in America and France during 1983, it was confirmed that the condition was caused by an infection which was blood borne and also sexually transmissible.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when his Department first became aware that acquired immune deficiency syndrome could be transmitted through blood and blood products.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: We became aware in 1982 of reports from the United States of America that haemophiliacs were contracting AIDS. Although the mechanism of infection was not known it was presumed that it had been



transmitted through the use of blood products such as factor VIII. Evidence that the AIDS infection could also be transmitted by blood transfusion emerged from the United States of America in 1983.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services which health authorities are providing resources for the treatment or study of acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986 c. 78]: All districts are expected to provide appropriate treatment for sick people in their areas, including AIDS cases where such exist. Authorities have been asked to provide by the end of December detailed action plans covering education, counselling, testing and treatment.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if he will give the number of people suffering from acquired immune deficiency syndrome currently being treated in National Health Service hospitals.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: People suffering from AIDS may develop a number of symptoms, some of which may require regular or intermittent in-patient treatment while others may receive NHS treatment as out-patients. Records are not kept centrally of the number of in-patients being treated at any one time.

**Mr. Dobson** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services (1) what is his estimate of the likely extent of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years;

(2) what additional resources will be required by the hospitals service to cope with his estimate of the likely incidence of acquired immune deficiency syndrome over the next five years.

**Mr. Newton** [pursuant to his reply, 17 November 1986, c. 78]: The latest published predictions by the Communicable Disease Surveillance centre estimate that in the United Kingdom there will be 550 new cases of AIDS diagnosed in 1986, 1,300 in 1987 and 3,000 in 1988. Inevitably these estimates involve a significant degree of uncertainty. There are no published predictions for the United Kingdom beyond 1988. Nor is it at present possible to make worthwhile estimates of the costs of hospital or other treatment for AIDS cases over the next five years.

### Benefits

**Mr. Dubs** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services how many people are currently in receipt of (a) supplementary benefit and (b) contributory benefit from the Wandsworth offices of his Department at Irene house, Arndale house and Parkgate road; and what were the comparable figures for 31 December 1984 and 31 December 1985.

**Mr. Lyell**: The number of people receiving supplementary benefit, from the Department's offices at Irene house, Arndale house and Parkgate road at 13 August 1986, the latest figures available, and at 12 December 1984 and 11 December 1985 is:

	12 December 1984	11 December 1985	26 August 1986
Irene House (Balham ILO)	12,942	13,243	13,572
Arndale House (Wandsworth ILO)	9,172	9,628	10,390
Parkgate Road (Battersea ILO)	13,567	13,839	14,341

Source: 100 per cent. count of cases in action.

All contributory benefit work for Irene house and Parkgate road offices is dealt with centrally and information about how many people are in receipt of contributory benefits in each local office area is not available.

Information about people claiming sickness and invalidity benefit, maternity allowance and severe disablement allowance from Arndale house at 21 October 1986, the latest figures available, and at 18 December 1984 and 17 December 1985 were as follows:

	18 December 1984	17 December 1985	21 October 1986
Sickness and Invalidity Benefit	1,349	1,700	1,441
Maternity Allowance	203	307	231
Severe Disablement Allowance	308	341	410

### Hyperactive Children's Support Group

**Mr. Gareth Wardell** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services if his Department will make financial resources available to the hyperactive children's support group.

**Mrs. Currie**: We have no plans to do so.

There is as yet no consensus of medical opinion on either the causes, or the most appropriate treatment, of hyperactivity in children. It would therefore be wrong for the Department to identify itself with the exclusively dietary theories advocated by the hyperactive children's support group, as other factors may well be at work.

### Severe Weather Payments

**Sir Hector Monro** asked the Secretary of State for Social Services when he intends to lay regulations relating to exceptionally severe weather payments.

**Mr. Major**: We have today laid before Parliament the Supplementary Benefit (Single Payments) Amendment Regulations 1986 which provide for a new system of exceptionally cold weather payments to take effect from 11 December 1986. These payments are in addition to the help given for heating through the main supplementary benefit scale rates and the weekly heating addition—payable automatically to supplementary benefit householders over the age of 65—which amounted to some £400 million in 1984-85.

The new regulations follow consultation with the Social Security Advisory Committee on proposals submitted to it in August. The committee's report on the proposals together with the Secretary of State's response has also been laid before Parliament today.

The committee support the main elements of the proposals as a significant improvement on the previous