

Buying defence equipment

Yesterday in the House the government made a statement on what had gone wrong in trying to buy 589 fighting vehicles for the army. So far very few have been delivered and those that have been have not met noise and vibration standards. This has raised hearing issues for some who have worked in them.

The Minister and the review are both critical of procedures . The Minister is leading the work to get the matter rectified by the contractor. He assured the House that the contract was at a fixed price of £5.5bn and the government's intent is to secure the delivery of 589 working vehicles that meet the required standards.

It is most important for the army and taxpayers that he succeeds. There have been too many cases of procurement overruns on time and budget and on the need to remedy or change specifications during the roll out of a programme. Let us hope the MOD can now find new ways to offer value for money and to secure the high quality vehicles, vessels and other equipment they need.