

12,653 UK  
troops East  
of Suez

The foreign exchange cost to Britain to maintain its naval, air and military forces East of Suez this year is estimated at £31 million.

This was disclosed by the Minister of State for Defence, Mr William Rodgers, in answer to a question from a Conservative Member of Parliament, Mr John Osborn, in the House of Commons last week.

He said the total strength of British forces stationed East of Suez on April 1 this year, was 12,653.

"Over 70 per cent of this figure represents Hongkong garrison and over half the total number of Gurkhas and locally-enlisted personnel."

With regard to the foreign exchange cost, he said in the current financial year it was estimated to be £31 million.

"Comparative figures for April 1971 and April 1966 were £57 million and £123 million respectively."

The Minister of State also stated that the comparative strength of the forces was 41,260 for April 1971 and 98,036 for April 1966.