



The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Defence

23 March 2023

Dear Secretary of State,

Government response to our report on UK defence policy

Thank you for your response to the International Relations and Defence Committee's report, 'UK defence policy: from aspiration to reality'.

We understand that, in view of the refresh to the Integrated Review and the forthcoming update to the 2021 Defence Command Paper, the Government has provided only an interim response at this stage. We look forward to receiving a more detailed response on issues relating to the UK's defence capabilities raised in our report after publication of the Defence Command Paper.

In particular, we would be grateful for further information on how Defence plans to refresh its relationship with industry, replenish equipment, and build greater resilience in its weapons and ammunition stocks. We also look forward to further information on how the Government plans to address shortfalls in the UK's hard power capabilities in light of the war in Ukraine, including how the £2 billion over two years allocated in the Spring Budget 2023 will be used to address those shortfalls.

We would also welcome more information on the UK's approach to the Middle East. Our report expressed concern that the original Integrated Review neglected the importance of the Middle East in its discussion of the UK's strategic priorities. We are disappointed that the recently published Integrated Review Refresh did not address this gap, and we urge the Government to give greater attention to the region in future strategic planning documents. We would be grateful if the final response to the Committee report could provide more information on the UK's strategic approach to the Middle East.

I am copying this letter to the Rt Hon James Cleverly MP, Foreign Secretary.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon the Lord Ashton of Hyde
Chair, International Relations and Defence Committee