



**SECRETARY OF STATE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE**

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4-8-1-2

24 May 2021

Dear Tobias

Thank you for your letter of 29 April 2021 and the opportunity to provide further detail to the Committee regarding the Carrier Strike Group deployment. I very much agree with you that this is a tremendous moment for the United Kingdom and is testament to the collective efforts of the Royal Navy, the Royal Air Force, British Industry and the Ministry of Defence over the past decade.

This defence-led activity is an embodiment of the Government's Integrated Review. Our plans for this deployment are an illustration of collaborative cross-government endeavour and as your letter notes, there are significant diplomatic, trade and security objectives that Carrier Strike Group '21 will achieve for the United Kingdom.

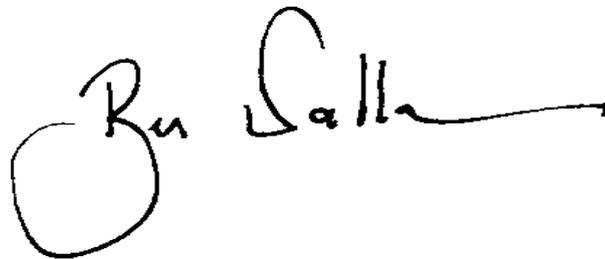
The policy objectives for the CSG21 deployment are to:

- send a clear message to our allies and adversaries that the UK can and will play a global leadership role, exerting influence on bilateral and regional issues to achieve HMG objectives and acting as a force for good in the world;
- prove our leading role in NATO through the strength of our capability, our readiness to operate closely with Allies, and our interoperability with the US and others;
- put the Integrated Review into action, underlining the UK's commitment to an enduring presence in the Indo-Pacific and win support for our goals and objectives there; this will include our Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) partners in this, the year of its fiftieth anniversary;
- reinforce existing UK international relationships and networks, and strengthen links with NATO's partners around the world. Establish new links with a broader audience, furthering defence engagement, political and prosperity objectives;

**The Rt Hon Tobias Ellwood MP
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- promote UK industry, technology and export sales across the breadth of the UK's commercial strengths. Improve trading relationships and trade cooperation, as well as pursuing investment prospects, especially in competitive markets; and
- build relationships between key officials and organisations.

The annex provides greater detail around the objectives for each phase of the deployment. You will appreciate that to protect operational security we won't provide detail on specific routing plans the Carrier Strike Group will make, beyond those we have outlined already, especially given the potential for change over the course of such a long and complex deployment.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Wallace". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, rounded initial "B" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

THE RT HON BEN WALLACE MP