

Defence launches inquiry into Navy and Naval Procurement 30/5/21

I have had a long-term interest in defence matters, and I am not representing my unitary council.

Terms of Reference.

1. Support the governments position on the RN's role over the next twenty years, in particular CSG 21 with our allies.

But I feel the Indo-Pacific should be limited to 2 OPV 2 and a frigate, forward positioning because of over stretch. When we increase our frigate numbers, we should join NATO force's Task Group's Atlantic and Mediterranean.

Naval Procurement.

1. F-35B procurement, should enable a force structure of 3 front line carrier squadrons of 8-9 aircraft per Squadron. France has three Squadrons. The RAF/RN has an OCU, the RAF has a land-based need for at least another squadron, until replaced by Tempest. This brings a requirement for a total number of F-35B of between 72-84 aircraft to be built at the latest, mid 2030's, dependent of the economics of the USA production rate of the F-35B.

The tender process of FSS is a complete waste of time. The priority of build is our frigates and Type 83 in Scotland. We have capacity issues in regards in personnel in ship building in England and Northern Ireland. We are also limited by numbers of RN and RFA personnel and defence resources, to sustain or be capable to achieve the build of small numbers of large ships. We can leverage industry to maximise sensible UK content.

2. Concerned like the committee, in delays to our submarine programmes, a very high-risk delay as a result of the 2010 review.
3. PIP has taken too long, Type 45 major electronic upgrades need to take place, including like the Royal Netherlands Navy of Thales Smart L (ours is S1850 variant). Mk41 should replace Sylver 50, to allow MK 5 Tomahawks and longer-range ABM and new missiles to deal with Hypersonic glide weapons as well as the Aster 30 Block 1 NT missiles. CEC should be fitted. Type 45's need to last 30+ years' service, they were built with a yearly delivery rate. Type 83 build will likely follow Type 26 on the Clyde on an 18 month delivery rate.
4. Agree with a possible frigate gap and your concerns.
5. The government is trying to save money and need to follow our other allies and friends with a least 10-12 motherships with mission bay for USV and a flight deck primarily for UAVs, like the BMT Mine warfare mothership/OPV hybrid Venari-85 concept, where they could be built is another matter. You can only have one ship in one place at one time.

6. No, see my point re FSS and MCM motherships. Industry needs certainty as well long- term procurement policies throughout government, which is wasteful and poor value for money, dependent on short term discipline control of the annual budget, we should learn from other countries. Ministers and civil servants should not see the NAO and House of Commons select committees as an enemy or ignore their advice and repeat mistakes on a continual basis, they should see them as critical friends. There are also success's, in particular from the Defence Procurement Agency.
7. The UK Type 26 is an overpriced excellent ASW design, missing unlike The RAN and RCN variants, CEC, SSM, Medium air defence and anti-missile capability (we don't need Aegis Mk6 or 7). For a price of £1.3BN per ship, I would expect a four faced planar array, like France's Sea Fire (including CEC), 48 cell MK 41 forward and a twelve cell (each with four Sea Ceptor missiles) Lockheed Martin ExLS soft launch launcher and SSM, in the same positions as the RCN ones, you just need to make changes to items on the superstructure. The increased AAW capability would release the pressure on Type 45. I would also expect the numbers of ESM to be the same as Type 23 and 45.

Type 31 is a national embarrassment; it is built for price of £250 million a ship wit a further £150 million for GFE and bringing it into service. The five ship French smaller CDI, is budgeted at 800 million Euros, has a towed array and hull mounted sonar and Sea Fire, allowing to utilise the mission envelope of the Aster 30 Block 1 NT missile. You pay for what you get. Type 31 has no ASW sonar, the helicopter, likely to be a Wildcat, has no dipping sonar, will not be flying for 24 hours a day, can't operate in very poor weather or sea state. Type 31 is built to NATO ASW standards and the engine bays, can be acoustically shielded. The vessel is built to NBC citadel standards, rather than the whole ship, like the recent Royal New Zealand Navy supply ship, to save money on Type 31. The ship has 12 individual Sea Ceptor launchers. Price has reduced connectivity and other capability like in Type 23 and Type 45. Other than the RNZN, I have been given the information by Babcock, who also told me, the design allows for a mid-ship stretch (I surmise a mission bay?).

Type 26 has no UK export build potential; the price negates it to countries who build their own ships and can afford it. The UK needs to build it for the RN and then build Type 83. Type 31 better equipped could be built for Chile, New Zealand and Gulf states at Rosyth.

8. Cancel Type 32, build better and more Type 31s and motherships, concerned about UK design capacity. Type 83 is likely to be larger and quieter than Type 45, do we need a UK only planar array, Sampson had no exports, and we are spending money on Tempest and autonomous vehicles.

A useful article from Naval Lookout, I am not involved with them

<https://www.navylookout.com/under-gunned-royal-navy-warships/>

It is obvious the government will need to spend more money, to reverse efficiency savings in the integrated review and to allow our three services capability gaps, to be removed over a twenty plus year period. This will increase governmental borrowing It will also needs to reverse RAF and RN personnel cuts of 2010, in particular recruit more women, time is needed to build up skills and experience. Autonomous vehicles will need to be serviced, requiring extra personnel.