



Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP
Secretary of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
Whitehall
London
SW1A 2HB

26th July 2019

Dear Mr Wallace,

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Secretary of State. I am writing to you because Prospect represents thousands of members working in defence across the UK. We would like to meet you to discuss the future direction of defence policy. We are politically independent and do not affiliate to a political party.

Prospect members directly underpin national defence and security; whether through their contribution to shipbuilding and maintenance at Babcock and BAE systems, providing technological and scientific expertise at QinetiQ, work on chemical weapons at DSTL, research and support to the nuclear deterrent at the Atomic Weapons Establishment, or in the Ministry of Defence itself. We are proud of our members work and their professional expertise.

However we are concerned about the direction of government defence policy in recent years. This largely relates to the overall level of defence spending, where we argue there needs to be more honesty about the defence spending needed in an uncertain world.

I was reassured to hear the new Prime Minister in his first statement in the House of Commons say that he wishes to increase spending "particularly on shipbuilding" and I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this with you in further detail.

In particular Prospect is calling for two decisions to be made quickly by the new administration:

- Type 31e frigate – signal the expansion of the initial order from 5 to 9 warships and place the contract as soon as possible;
- Fleet Solid Support ships – quickly place the order for the three ships with UK yards.

This should make sure that the Type 31e programme can deliver quickly enough to make sure frigate numbers do not drop still further and bring the frigate fleet back to 2010 numbers in time.

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As well as investing in naval capability it will also safeguard skills that are in danger of being lost and provide a welcome boost for shipbuilding communities in all corners of the UK.

Trade unions have always had a strong working relationship with the public and private defence sector and we are proud of that legacy. I hope you are able meet to discuss how we might work together to support the defence workforce in the UK.

As your predecessor did not acknowledge or reply to my letter on the same subject in May we will be sharing this letter publicly so our members know we are pressing these issues with government.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Clancy". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Mike Clancy

General Secretary