



Ministry
of Defence

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4.2.6.12

21st December 2016

Dear Philip,

During the oral statement on Yemen on 19 December you asked how many BL755 cluster munitions were exported from this country to Saudi Arabia before 1989 and what the shelf life is of these munitions (Official Report, column 1223) and I undertook to write to you.

The UK delivered 500 BL755 cluster munitions under a government-to-government agreement signed in 1986. The final delivery was made in 1989. The withdrawal of support for these munitions, which followed the UK's commitment to the Oslo Declaration, meant that the UK could not conduct any future In-Service Surveillance (ISS) programme in respect of BL755 after 2008. The UK's assurance process mandates that an ISS programme is conducted to provide the evidence required to demonstrate that a munition is safe and suitable for service (S3) beyond its known life. The last BL755 ISS programme was conducted in 2006 and demonstrated that the Saudi stock would remain S3 until 2008. The UK's obligations under the Cluster Munitions Convention meant that the UK could not continue to assure BL755 as S3 beyond 2008. This does not mean that Saudi stocks of BL755 were not safe and suitable for service from that date, only that UK personnel and contractors have not had the evidence to demonstrate these stocks as S3 since 2008.

I am placing a copy of this letter in the Library of the House.

Yours e,
Michael

THE RT HON SIR MICHAEL FALLON KCB MP

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