



SECRETARY OF STATE
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
FLOOR 5, ZONE D, MAIN BUILDING
WHITEHALL LONDON SW1A 2HB

Telephone 020 7218 9000
Fax: 020 721 87140
E-mail: defencesecretary-group@mod.gov.uk

MSU/4/5/2/8/is

28 May 2024

Dear Sir Jeremy,

I would like to start by reflecting on the profound change that this Government's commitment to increasing Defence spending to 2.5% of GDP has made. This will ensure that the Royal Navy are at the heart of our national defences, funding a new golden age of shipbuilding that will underpin this.

Having secured this commitment and having reviewed the First Sea Lord's advice on how to sustain and enable the Royal Marines (RM) into the future, I was delighted to announce at the Sea Power Conference on 14 May that I have given the green light for the acquisition of up to six new Multi Role Support Ships (MRSS). These UK built ships will ensure our extraordinary RM have the versatility, the heavy-lift capability, that they need to continue being the best by sea and by land for generations of Commandos to come. I hope that you will understand that this important update has taken some time to enable, but that you appreciate that I wanted to wait to provide a substantive update once possible.

Turning to the Landing Platform Docks (LPDs), you will be aware that neither HMS ALBION nor HMS BULWARK will be scrapped or mothballed before their planned out of service dates in 2033 and 2034 respectively. As has been the case since 2010, one LPD will be held in extended readiness such that she will be capable of being regenerated if we have strategic notice that she will be needed. Therefore, HMS ALBION will take HMS BULWARK's place in extended readiness. While you would not expect me to reveal the fine detail of readiness forecasts for security reasons, I can confirm HMS BULWARK will be regenerated from extended readiness and maintained so that she can be ready to deliver defence outputs if required. In the meantime, the remainder of the amphibious fleet will continue to support RM forward deployed in the Arctic and in the Eastern Mediterranean, as they are doing currently.

Rt Hon Jeremy Quin MP
Defence Select Committee Chair
Committee Office
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

I hope this letter goes some way to reaffirm my commitment to the RN, including the excellent work of our RM, and more broadly underlines my commitment to UK shipbuilding.

A copy of this letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

THE RT HON GRANT SHAPPS MP