



Ministry of Defence

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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LUKE POLLARD MP
MINISTER FOR THE ARMED FORCES

4/8/1/1

21 February 2025

Dear Dr Andrew,

During an Adjournment Debate on Air Defence Capabilities on Thursday 16th January 2025, I promised a letter providing further clarification on our efforts.

I wanted to state that we take the challenges posed by the advancing and proliferating threat seriously. The Ministry of Defence continually reviews its approach and posture in relation to evolving threats, and air and missile defence is no exception. Through the SDR we are working to ensure we are better protected than ever and I referenced many of these efforts during my speech.

Defence remains committed to enhancing and modernising our approach to air and missile defence, both for our own forces and through our integration with NATO Allies. I wanted to highlight some of the key areas where we are increasing the UK's extensive range of existing air and missile capabilities. These include:

- Our radar at **RAF Flyingdales** provides constant early warning against ballistic missile threats.
- Increasing the number of **SkySabre** (Medium Range Ground Based Air Defence) launchers to 9.
- Investing in the development of **Sea Viper Evolution** missiles to increase protection against ballistic missiles, on track to enter service in 2028.
- Purchasing **E-7 Wedgetail** Airborne Early Warning aircraft which will vastly improve our ability to detect incoming threats and ensure the best asset can defeat it, entering service later this year.
- We are increasing collaboration within **AUKUS** and exploring ways to build upon our offer to **NATO**.

The Rt Hon Dr Andrew Murrison MP
House of Commons
London
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- Development of cutting-edge technologies such as the **DragonFire** directed energy weapon.
- Exploring closer technological development opportunities with our Allies. Projects such as the European Sky Shield Initiative (**ESSI**) and the European Long-range Strike Approach (**ELSA**) are crucial to these efforts and continue to progress.
- The UK and Germany have signed the landmark Trinity House Agreement which saw us commit to identify opportunities for industrial collaboration and to cohere Integrated Air and Missile Defence activity to better protect European airspace.
- Various R&D efforts, many organised by the **UK's Missile Defence Centre** into the detection and interception high-end technologies of the future.

Building on these the SDR will investigate off-the-shelf capabilities as well as next generation opportunities. We are not just reviewing our own capabilities, but in parallel working at pace to boost interoperability with Allies, which we will focus on while the SDR shapes our next capability choices. We must also consider how our choices will complement the mix of capabilities across NATO so that as an Alliance we make the right choices that can deter and defend against the threats we face, and as such we must remain closely aligned with NATO's own planning process.

These efforts will provide a major contribution to homeland defence and national resilience, supporting the much needed modernisation of our Armed Forces.

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

Yours sincerely,

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

LUKE POLLARD MP