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*From Senior Policy Advisor
National Security Secretariat*

██████████
Defence Synergia

27 July 2018

Dear ██████████

DEFENCE SYNERGIA RESPONSE

Thank you for your recent letter to the Prime Minister, setting out your concerns on the financing of Defence and what our armed forces can achieve in times of conflict.

I have sought to address these below, but have also passed your letter to the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to help inform their thinking for phase two of the Modernising Defence Programme (MDP).

You rightly articulate the need for a “Grand Strategy” to guide the Government’s first priority of protecting our national security and the safety of British people both at home and abroad, and that is exactly what the National Security Strategy (NSS) and Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) 2015 does. Indeed the 2015 NSS and SDRS sets out the vision and three National Security Objectives: Protect Our People; Project Our Global Influence; and Promote Our Prosperity that would echo your final points. Last year, the National Security Council recognised that since 2015, the security challenges that the United Kingdom faces have become more complex and intertwined as the world has become more uncertain and volatile. They commissioned the National Security and Capability Review (NSCR), published in March this year. The NSCR concluded that while the framework of the NSS and SDRS remain right, we could further develop, deliver and deploy our considerable national security capabilities to maximum collective effect. This included a decision to commission the MDP to ensure our defence capabilities meet the changing threats that we face. This new approach, based on the Fusion Doctrine (set out in the NSCR), will improve our collective approach to national security, building on the creation of the National Security Council eight years ago.

The defence budget is approximately £37 billion this year, one of the largest in the world, and the highest in Europe, it is increasing in real terms by £1 billion each year so that it will be almost £40 billion by 2021. The UK remains one of the few countries to exceed NATO’s 2% of GDP spending target, and the Government have committed to increase the defence budget by at least 0.5% above inflation every

year. The MDP was commissioned to ensure we use these resources effectively and deliver the efficiencies that the MOD has committed to so that they can be reinvested in the capabilities that the armed forces require. The MDP will deliver better military capability, in a sustainable and affordable way. The initial phase of the MDP has allowed MOD to review its existing capability plans, begun to shape new policy approaches and identify investment priorities, as well as developing a new blueprint for a major programme of top-down transformative reform. Defence needs to play a major and increasing role in supporting an integrated, cross-Government approach to national security through the practical application of the Fusion doctrine, where the total is more than the sum of the parts. The United Kingdom retains a unique panoply of both hard and soft power and will continue to meet our commitments to our partners and maintain a full spectrum of nuclear, conventional and cyber capabilities to match our leading role on the world stage.

Yours sincerely

Neil

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