

## Key Points to make to Peter Luff MP, Minister for Defence Equipment, Support and Technology

20 September 2010

- 1.1 **The Keep Our Future Afloat Campaign (KOFAC) is a community and trade union led campaign.** It aims to secure a vibrant shipyard that can deliver the capability the Royal Navy will need, and to:
- sustain and grow jobs in naval shipbuilding in NW England;
  - secure full utilisation of the NW of England’s shipbuilding assets and the supply chain it maintains throughout the UK. This is very important because almost every constituency contributes to the building of a new submarine – 60% of it is built by the supply chain.
- 1.2 **“Defence Matters” to the UK economy** as it can help create a more balanced economy. Britain’s defence industrial base is a front line service - the skills within it support the armed forces by providing them with the capabilities they require to protect our national security and deter threats.
- 1.3 **The UK’s maritime capability enables it to address potential threats to UK security at distance. The SDSR should define the kind of navy we need in years to come.** Four key tasks must be performed: *“safe passage of our merchant fleet; movement of armed forces by sea and into the littoral environment quickly and safely; hard support on the ground and delivery of the strategic deterrent.”*<sup>(1)</sup>
- 1.4 **Nuclear powered submarines play a unique and vital role in our national defence.** They are *“the most sophisticated and flexible weapons that we have to exercise sea control,”* *“Astute submarines can deter almost any other navy from putting to sea against us.”*<sup>(2)</sup>
- 1.5 **“As long as nuclear weapons exist”, there is a need to “sustain safe, secure and effective nuclear forces”... to “play an essential role in deterring potential adversaries and reassuring allies”.** We must sustain the policy of **“continuously at sea” deterrent patrols.** Retention of the strategic nuclear deterrent is best done with a new fleet of 4 SSBN nuclear powered submarines. They will deliver the optimum survivable solution for the deterrent capability. **By 2024-2026** the first of the Vanguard class will be over 34 years old and could be more at risk of detection.
- 1.6 **A fleet of up to 8 Astute class submarines will protect the strategic deterrent, give the UK advantages in undersea warfare** and facilitate a *“smooth transition from the Astute programme to the successor deterrent.”*<sup>(3)</sup> thereby sustaining crucial skills.
- 1.7 **SDSR must deliver a Defence Industrial Strategy to guide industry investment and build its confidence.** A new DIS should sustain sovereign capability to design, build, operate and dispose of nuclear powered submarines. The *Submarine Enterprise Collaboration Agreement* is a foundation for delivering the current Astute and successor submarine programmes.

(1) Alison Seabeck MP, 21 June 2010 Hansard Col.76

(2) MoD, Submarine Enterprise Collaborative Agreement Impact Assessment <http://www.mod.uk/NR/ronlyres/D929BC42-1968-4BD8-95E4-BE8CB71F576E/0/SecalImpactAssessmentFinalVersion.pdf>. *“The capability provided by nuclear submarines is therefore unique and of vital importance to national defence”.*

(3) Statement by Secretary of State for Defence, 25 March 2010

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- 1.8 **The capacity to build a nuclear submarine is not something that can be picked off the shelf. When there are discontinuities in capability between the end of a programme and the start of another as with the Astute after Vanguard, hard lessons were learned.** Today, skills retention is crucial - the UK Submarine Enterprise is optimised in terms of its size and programme such that any small disruption to overall programme assumptions has the potential for a dramatic impact on the business, which rapidly becomes unsustainable from a skills retention perspective. A steady flow of orders is needed, otherwise people will go and you may not then be able to reconstitute capability to build or insert new capability.
- 1.9 **There are few opportunities for diversification to mitigate any hiatus in demand.** PA Consulting concluded.....
- 1.10 **Attracting and keeping skills means investing to provide the homes, leisure educational and other facilities that Furness needs to attract and retain skilled people.** Resources such as the Regional Growth Fund and the current £40m college and university campus going up in Barrow can help support defence manufacturing .