



Ministry
of Defence

[REDACTED]

FOI2019/10834

E-mail: Navysec-foimailbox@mod.gov.uk

[REDACTED]

17 October 2019

Dear [REDACTED],

Release of Information

Thank you for your correspondence of 19 September 2019 in which you requested the following information:

'Has the MoD considered the procurement of more T26 and/or T31e frigates required for high-intensity missions, CSG, underwater threats, and better US Navy interoperability between Carrier Strike Groups as per the APPG Shipbuilding and Ship Repair report, titled Inquiry into the National Shipbuilding Strategy?'

Your enquiry has been considered to be a request for information in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. A search for the information has been completed within the Ministry of Defence and I can confirm information in scope of your request is held.

In response to your request, I can advise that, as set out in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015 (SDSR15) and the National Shipbuilding Strategy, the Government remains committed to a surface fleet of at least 19 frigates and destroyers. SDSR15 confirmed that the frigate fleet would be formed of eight advanced anti-submarine warfare (ASW) Type 26 Frigates and a new class of general-purpose frigates (now known as the Type 31 Frigates). It remains the Government's intent to grow the destroyer and frigate force by the 2030s, and the Type 31 Frigates will provide the opportunity to do this.

Growing for the first time in a generation, the Royal Navy will have new aircraft carriers and will soon take delivery of the second (HMS PRINCE OF WALES), new submarines, frigates, patrol vessels, aircraft, support ships and tankers.

The Type 26 Frigates will provide critical protection to the Continuous At Sea Deterrent and Maritime Task Groups. They will build on the pedigree of the Royal Navy's current Type 23 ASW Frigates. Steel for HMS GLASGOW was cut in July 2017 and for HMS CARDIFF in August of this year. HMS BELFAST is on order and we expect manufacture to start in

2021. We plan to award a contract for the remaining five Type 26 Frigates in the early 2020s.

On 12 September the Prime Minister announced that the consortium led by Babcock, in partnership with the Thales Group, had been selected as the preferred bidder for the Type 31. Engagement is now underway to award the Design and Build Contract by the end of this year. The Type 31 will be at the core of the Royal Navy's surface fleet, deterring aggression and maintaining the security of the UK's interests. They will work alongside our Allies to deliver credible UK warship presence across the globe. Flexible and adaptable by design, the Type 31 Frigates will undertake missions such as interception and disruption of those using the sea for unlawful purposes, collecting intelligence, conducting defence engagement and assisting those in need.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely

Navy Command Secretariat – FOI Section