

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

16<sup>th</sup> October 2020

*Dear Constance,*

**RE: TRIDENT.**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of Trident.

I believe it is absolutely vital that we maintain a continuous independent nuclear deterrent as the ultimate guarantee of our national security. Although no state currently has both the intent and the capability to threaten the independence and integrity of the UK, given the unpredictable security environment we face, maintaining our nuclear deterrent remains crucial for our protection and defence.

Despite successes over recent decades in limiting the number of states with nuclear capabilities, we cannot rule out a major shift in the international security situation which would put us under grave threat. The Government's policy, which was overwhelmingly supported by Parliament in 2016, is to maintain the Trident continuous at sea nuclear deterrent to provide the ultimate guarantee of our safety. This is part of a wider programme to maintain the UK's nuclear deterrent beyond the early 2030s, which will see the introduction of four Dreadnought Class ballistic missile submarines to replace the current four Vanguard submarines - securing thousands of highly skilled engineering jobs in the UK too.

I am also aware that work is underway to replace the existing warheads, to ensure an effective nuclear deterrent throughout the commission of the Dreadnought submarines. The Defence Nuclear Organisation is currently working with the Atomic Weapons Establishment to build the highly skilled teams and put in place the facilities and capabilities needed to deliver the replacement warhead, while also sustaining the current warhead until it is withdrawn from service.

Whilst I recognise that you take a very different view, and do so with all sincerity, personally, I welcome the commitment to support the renewal of Trident with a fleet of four submarines. The nuclear deterrent protects all of the UK and scrapping it would dangerously weaken our collective security.

That said, in terms of moving towards a world of fewer nuclear weapons, the UK's policy of maintaining a minimum credible deterrent has gone beyond other nuclear weapon states as the only one to have reduced its nuclear capability to a single weapon system. The UK has also gone further than other nuclear-armed states in reducing its operationally available warhead stockpile to no more than 120.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*With best wishes,*  
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Tom'.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP**  
**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT**  
**CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**