22 March 2012

Dear [Name],

Thank you for your letter of 22 February drawing my attention to the Committee’s Report ‘Developing Threats: Electro-Magnetic Pulses (EMP)’. The Government will give a full response to the Report as soon as possible.

The risks posed by the acquisition of nuclear weapons by States such as North Korea and, potentially, Iran are well understood in Government, and we do not underestimate the potential effects that such weapons would have were they ever to be used against us. We are making every effort to ensure that this does not happen.

I was interested in your Committee’s observations on the risks posed by severe space weather. The effects of geomagnetic storms and natural EMP have been under careful review by the Government for some time, and we have set up a Space Environment Impact Experts Group to consider how a modern-day Carrington event might disrupt operations of the National Grid and other national infrastructure.

I am very grateful to you and the House of Commons Defence Committee for bringing these matters to my attention.

Yours,

[Signature]

The Right Honourable James Arbuthnot MP