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[www.gov.uk/number10](http://www.gov.uk/number10)

From Alex Ellis

09 April 2020

Dear Mr Etherton,

Further to his letter dated 24 March, the Prime Minister has directed that work on the Integrated Review should now be formally paused across Whitehall. This is due to the pressing need to focus on COVID-19, which will, of course, have significant international implications. We wanted to inform the Committee of this decision, and as such I would be grateful if you would convey this information to the Chair and Members of the Defence Committee. A WMS will be laid before Parliament after the Easter Recess to provide formal notification in the usual way.

This pause on the Integrated Review will mean that the consultation and engagement that we had planned with external stakeholders and Parliament, including private briefings, will be placed on hold until the Review is resumed. Similarly, the Government will respond to the Committee's calls for written evidence once the Integrated Review resumes. We cannot say yet when that will happen, but the Government will of course keep Parliament updated.

We are retaining a small core capacity to think about the long-term effect of COVID-19 and issues expected to be covered in the Integrated Review. This team will be very limited in size and function, but its tasks will include following the progress of the Committee's inquiry and to be ready for resumption, including re-engaging with the Committee when appropriate.

We welcome the Committee's interest in the Integrated Review, and look forward to engaging again on it in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alex Ellis'.

**Alex Ellis**  
**Deputy National Security Adviser**