

The Defence Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP has this afternoon (14th October 2011) written to the Prime Minister to tender his resignation.

The text of Dr Fox's letter:

Dear David,

As you know, I have always placed a great deal of importance on accountability and responsibility. As I said in the House of Commons on Monday, I mistakenly allowed the distinction between my personal interest and my Government activities to become blurred. The consequences of this have become clearer in recent days. I am very sorry for this.

I have also repeatedly said that the national interest must always come before personal interest. I now have to hold myself to my own standard. I have therefore decided, with great sadness, to resign from my post as Secretary of State for Defence – a position which I have been immensely proud and honoured to have held.

I am particularly proud to have overseen the long overdue reforms to the Ministry of Defence and to our Armed Forces, which will shape them to meet the challenges of the future and keep this country safe.

I am proud also to have played a part in helping to liberate the people of Libya, and I regret that I will not see through to its conclusion Britain's role in Afghanistan, where so much progress has been made.

Above all, I am honoured and humbled to have worked with the superb men and women in our Armed Forces. Their bravery, dedication and professionalism are second to none.

I appreciate all the support you have given me and will continue to support the vital work of this Government, above all in controlling the enormous budget deficit we inherited, which is a threat not just to this country's economic prosperity but also to its national security.

I look forward to continuing to represent my constituents in North Somerset.

Yours ever,

Liam

In reply, the Prime Minister wrote :

Dear Liam,

Thank you for your letter.

I understand your reasons for deciding to resign as Defence Secretary, although I am very sorry to see you go.

We have worked closely for these last six years, and you have been a key member of my team throughout that time.

You have done a superb job in the 17 months since the election, and as Shadow Defence Secretary before that.

You have overseen fundamental changes in the Ministry of Defence and in our Armed Forces, which will ensure that they are fully equipped to meet the challenges of the modern era.

On Libya, you played a key role in the campaign to stop people being massacred by the Gaddafi regime and instead win their freedom.

You can be proud of the difference you have made in your time in office, and in helping our party to return to Government.

I appreciate your commitment to the work of this Government, particularly highlighting the need to tackle the deficit, and the relationship between Britain's economic strength and our national security.

You and Jesme have always been good friends, and I have truly valued your support over the years. I will continue to do so in the future.

Yours ever,

David