

News story: £260M job-sustaining contract for advanced identification system

The system, called Mode-5 and developed for the MOD by UK-based company Leonardo, uses advanced cryptographic techniques and world-leading electronic technology to allow UK land, sea and air units to quickly identify friendly forces and operate safely alongside NATO allies across any battlefield.

Mode-5 IFF has been designed to give UK units a clear and secure view of potential threats and targets, providing a powerful cyber shield against jamming and interference intended to reduce vital situational awareness.

The contract will allow Leonardo to install the system in more than 350 units ranging from Royal Air Force's Sentry aircraft to the Royal Navy's Type 45 anti-air destroyers and the British Army's High Velocity Missile (HVM) multiple launcher system.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

This £260 million contract for battle-winning technology builds on decades of operational experience to keep UK pilots, soldiers and sailors safe on operations.

It is yet another example of the jobs and skills-sustaining impact of the Government's £178 billion equipment plan to supply the UK's armed forces with the best possible kit.

Less-advanced IFF systems have been used by nations all over the world since the 1940s. Mode-5 uses the same basic 'call-and-response' method as earlier systems, but significantly improves on them. Crucially, the system can easily interface with allied forces, reducing the risk of 'friendly fire' incidents between UK units and the units of other allies.

Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S) Chief Executive Officer Tony Douglas said:

Advances in digital and cyber warfare mean that it's never been more important for UK military forces to have the kind of confidence in their situational awareness that Mode-5 IFF instils.

The installation of this world-leading system will continue to give our fighting men and women a decisive edge on operations.

The new contract will cover the installation of Mode-5 on pieces of equipment that are in service already with the UK. New platforms coming into service in the future, including the Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, F-35 Lightning II combat aircraft and the new Apache AH64E Helicopters are being fitted with Mode-5 under separate contracts over the course of their construction.

China to upgrade submersible Jiaolong before 2019

China plans to upgrade its submersible Jiaolong before 2019, scientists said Thursday.

The submersible ended its trial phase last week after completing the country's 38th and its fourth oceanic scientific expedition, which lasted four months.

It will return to east China's Qingdao on Friday aboard mothership Xiangyanghong 09.

Jiaolong made dozens of dives during the expedition and descended to nearly 6,700 meters in the Yap Trench in the west Pacific, close to its record depth of 7,062 meters in 2012.

Scientists observed and photographed large marine creatures and the seabed, and collected seawater, rocks and samples of marine life from the deep sea.

The 39-year-old Xiangyanghong 09 is also set to retire after carrying Jiaolong for hundreds of dives since 2009.

A new mothership for Jiaolong is under construction, and is scheduled to be launched around the end of 2018.

Today's High Court decision is a further demonstration of the failure of this government's austerity agenda

– Jeremy Corbyn and Debbie Abrahams

Jeremy Corbyn MP,

Leader of the Labour Party, commenting on today's High Court judgement that the Benefit

Cap unlawfully discriminates against single parents with children aged two or under, said:

"Today's High Court decision is a further demonstration of the failure of this government's austerity agenda. It is failing in its own terms,

it's failing our communities, and it's failing the most vulnerable in our country – including the victims of domestic violence and those facing homelessness.

"Labour has stood against the benefit cap, its discrimination against parents with children and the government's cruel austerity programme.

"Our Shadow Foreign Secretary, Emily Thornberry MP, tabled an amendment to the Benefit Cap legislation to exclude families with children under two from the cap when it came before parliament.

"The Government should have listened to Labour then, but I am pleased the High Court has listened to these courageous campaigners now.

"The Prime Minister should accept the High Court's judgement and end this discrimination against parents and children."

Debbie Abrahams MP,

Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the judgement, said:

"I welcome the court's decision on the Benefit Cap today, and commend the brave campaigners who took this case against the Government on behalf of the 17,000 families affected.

"This is another damaging blow to the Government's failing austerity agenda. While many families have struggled to make ends meet, this Government has given hand-outs to some of the richest in our society.

"The social security system should be there for us all in our time of need.

"For too long this Government has pushed children into poverty, as punishment for their parent's circumstances.

"I therefore welcome the High Court's judgement that this policy is unlawful, which marks another blow in their failing austerity agenda.

"Labour will transform the social security system so that, like the NHS, it is there for us all in our time of need."

Jeremy Corbyn response to the Prime Minister's Grenfell Tower statement

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party, responding to the Prime Minister's statement to the House on Grenfell Tower, said:

Can I start by expressing my disappointment to the Prime Minister at the lack of advance sight of her statement.

I met with the survivors of Grenfell Tower and those inspiring volunteers co-ordinating the relief effort for families who had lost so much. I hope the whole House will join with me in commending the community spirit and public support which helped so many traumatised families.

Our love, our condolences and our solidarity goes out to those families again today and in the difficult days and weeks ahead.

They were, as the Prime Minister said yesterday, let down: both in the immediate aftermath and so cruelly beforehand. And the public inquiry must establish the extent and by whom.

At least 79 people are dead. It is both a tragedy and an outrage because every single one of those deaths could have been avoided.

The Grenfell Tower residents themselves had raised concerns about the lack of fire safety in their block.

The Grenfell Action Group had warned, and I quote, "It is a truly terrifying thought but the Grenfell Action Group firmly believes that only a catastrophic event will expose the ineptitude and incompetence of our landlord, the Kensington & Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation".

The Prime Minister said "It is right that the CEO of Kensington & Chelsea has now resigned". It may be, but why aren't the political leaders

taking responsibility too?

From Hillsborough, to the child sex abuse scandal, to Grenfell Tower the pattern is consistent. Working class people's voices are ignored, their concerns dismissed, by those in power.

The Grenfell Tower residents and north Kensington community deserve answers and thousands of people living in tower blocks around the country need urgent reassurance.

Our brave firefighters must never have to deal with such a horrific incident again.

Those of us with over 30 years' experience in this House would have struggled under the pressure generated by an incident of this scale. So as I said yesterday, my Honourable Friend for Kensington deserves praise for the tireless and diligent way she has stood up for her constituents.

They need answers and the public inquiry must address:

The apparent failure of the fire alarms at Grenfell Tower, which meant many residents reported they were only alerted to the fire by the screams of their neighbours.

Whether the advice given to tenants to stay in their homes was correct and what advice should be given to the people living in the 4,000 other tower blocks around our country.

Why sprinklers were not installed and whether they now should be retrofitted into all tower blocks.

Whether the cladding used was illegal, as the Chancellor has suggested, and whether it should be banned entirely and what wider changes must be made to building regulations and to fire prevention regulations, including the frequency and enforcement of fire safety checks.

Whether tenant management organisations are responsive enough to their tenants and what greater powers tenants need.

Whether survivors and people evacuated from adjacent properties were rehoused promptly and adequately and whether they will all be rehoused within the borough with no increase in their rent.

The resources available to the Fire & Rescue Service, and whether response times and capacity are adequate in all areas of the country, since the number of wards in which response time targets are not being met has increased tenfold since 2011.

Lessons must be learned in the public inquiry and a disaster that

never should have happened must never happen again.

The Government must delay no longer and now implement the recommendations of the 2013 inquiry report following the Lakanal House fire.

The public inquiry into Grenfell Tower must also establish whether lives could have been saved if those recommendations had have been implemented in full and if the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Group had been heeded by government.

Fire safety measures cannot be left to a postcode lottery so I ask the government make available emergency funds as my Honourable Friend for Leeds West also asked yesterday, so that councils can carry out fire safety checks and install sprinklers, and the timetable for that made known to residents.

Will the Prime Minister also ensure that counselling and mental health services are available to all the residents of Grenfell Tower and those who witnessed it unfold on the Lancaster West Estate, including the emergency services who responded.

Mr Speaker, the public inquiry must report as soon as possible and changes that can and should have been made already must now be made without delay.

[These figures reveal the scale of the crisis the Tories have created for our schools – Angela Rayner](#)

Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education

Secretary, commenting on the

release of the Schools Workforce statistics showing that more teachers are leaving the profession than joining, said:

“These figures reveal the scale of the crisis the Tories have created for our schools.

“The Government's responsibility is to ensure our schools have the resources they need to train enough teachers. The Tories have failed to do so.

“This is a damning verdict on seven years of failure from Conservative governments, and

without urgent action on teacher recruitment and retention, a generation of children will pay the price for that failure.”