

Carrier Strike Group Looks Forward to a Busy Autumn in Indo-Pacific and Middle East

Having passed the midway point of its first operational deployment, the UK Carrier Strike Group is preparing for a return transit through the Indo-Pacific, Middle East and Mediterranean.

Since the end of May, the CSG has sailed over 32,000 nautical miles from the UK to Japan undertaking a range of air and maritime operations from the Black Sea to the Philippine Sea.

As a tangible demonstration of the UK's Indo-Pacific tilt, over the past three months, ships from the Strike Group have conducted a series of engagements with regional partners including Brunei, Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand and Vietnam.

In a further demonstration of this international deployment, over the next two weeks the CSG will navigate the South China Sea with ships and aircraft from Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said:

"CSG continues to demonstrate our enduring commitment to global security and international alliances, from the Indo-Pacific to the Middle-East and beyond.

"Our engagement with our allies and partners will endure long after the CSG's visits and exercises end, with the permanent deployment of HMS Tamar and HMS Spey to the Indo-Pacific and close cooperation with our Five Powers Defence partners around the world.

"Exercising and cooperation with like-minded allies is vital to tackle the common threats we face, contributing to a safer and more secure world."

HMS Diamond – a Type 45 Destroyer from the CSG – will also shortly be participating in Exercise Bersama Gold, marking the 50th anniversary of the Five Powers Defence Arrangements alongside Australia, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand.

The busy period of military engagement in the Indo-Pacific, has also been mirrored by diplomatic progress. In a landmark moment, the UK became a Dialogue Partner of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on 5 August, the first new country in 25 years. This comes as the UK and Japan announced that formal negotiations will begin this month to increase bilateral defence cooperation.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

“The UK is committed to strengthening our ties across the Indo-Pacific and the deployment of the UK Carrier Strike Group demonstrates our commitment to the region, and our desire to build deeper economic, diplomatic and security partnerships.

“By visiting, working and exercising alongside our partners we are standing up for our mutual interests, supporting regional stability, boosting our ties and promoting new trading opportunities.”

Later this autumn, the CSG will visit India for joint maritime exercises as well as a programme of diplomatic engagements. The CSG will conduct other engagements in the region before travelling to the Gulf.

The Task Group will undertake F35 exercises with Oman and UAE air forces in the Gulf, and maritime training alongside the Royal Navy of Oman. Simultaneously the British Army will be taking part in exercises with Royal Army of Oman units which will link back to the ship to demonstrate interoperability between land and sea forces.