

# Defence Secretary affirms UK's commitment to High North on visit to Denmark and Sweden

The Defence Secretary has met with his Danish and Swedish counterparts to discuss shared threats, including NATO's response to the situation in eastern Europe and increasing competition in the Arctic.

In meetings with Danish Defence Minister Trine Bramsen on 8 December, and Swedish Defence Minister Peter Hultqvist on the 9 December, the Secretary of State reaffirmed the UK's close defence relationship with our northern partners.

## **The Defence Secretary, Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, said:**

At a time of growing threats and increasing competition in the High North, we have some of the closest cooperation with our Danish, Swedish and Norwegian partners.

We work together annually on military exercises and operations, learning from each other and strengthening our partnerships.

Our ability to operate in this way is the firm foundation of our shared resolve to stand up for our values.

Denmark and Sweden are both members of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) – 10 nations working together to deliver forces at high readiness, across a range of roles, complementing NATO and European security. During the visit the Defence Secretary met ambassadors from the JEF nations to discuss the co-ordination of members in response to grey-zone threats.

During a visit to Arvidsjaur in Swedish Lapland, the Defence Secretary met personnel from the newly re-established Norrland Dragoon Regiment, which focuses on Arctic Warfare and where the UK is looking to learn from our Scandinavian partners to deepen our expertise.

The UK's [Integrated Review](#) and [Defence Command Paper](#) set out the UK's commitment to the High North. As the nearest neighbour to the Arctic, the UK is committed to working with partners such as Denmark and Sweden to ensure that increasing access to the region and its resources is managed safely, sustainably and responsibly.

In addition to formal talks, the Defence Secretary also laid a wreath at the Swedish Memorial Monument.

In 2019, the UK and Sweden signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) on the Future Combat Air System, known as the Tempest Programme. International partnership

has been at the heart of the UK's approach to combat air for decades and the UK and Sweden continue to work on the programme which will support national and European security for decades ahead.

The Defence Secretary is greeted by the Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod.