

[Defence Secretary announces new UK Defence Arctic Strategy in Norway](#)

Press release

The UK's new defence strategy in the Arctic region has been announced in Norway today by Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.



[The UK's Defence Contribution in the High North](#) outlines plans to protect critical underwater national infrastructure and ensure freedom of navigation through international seas and Exclusive Economic Zones in the Arctic region.

The strategy sets out the UK's commitments to NATO, such as increasing UK training and operations in the area with Allies and international partners. The UK will also invest in research and development to build a sustainable and modernised Defence capability for the region.

As part of the new strategy, the UK will maintain a periodic Royal Navy presence in the High North. The strategy also reinforces support to Arctic Allies to preserve the stability and security of the Arctic region.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace MP said:

The High North and the impact of climate change affects us all whether we like it or not. The North Atlantic will always be the UK's 'home beat' and so it is vital that we strengthen both our interoperability and our force integration with NATO and non-NATO partners in the region.

The Defence Secretary met his Norwegian counterpart Odd Roger Enoksen, as well as those taking part in Exercise COLD RESPONSE 22 during his time in Norway.

Exercise COLD RESPONSE 22 is a Norwegian-led exercise with 35,000 troops from 28 participants nations. The main UK contribution saw six Royal Navy ships and 2,000 UK personnel carrying out cold-weather training in northern Norway.

While the exercises are routine, they demonstrate the UK's commitment to Allied forces which need to be ready to operate in any environment under any conditions.

Training in Norway allows NATO Allies and partners to practise their skills operating in extreme and rugged surroundings. Around 900 Royal Marines have been deployed to the Arctic since January in preparation for the exercises, sharpening their expertise in operating in the freezing conditions.

The Defence Secretary met with the crew onboard one of the UK's two aircraft carriers, HMS Prince of Wales, which has been leading the Royal Navy's contribution to Exercise COLD RESPONSE 22. While onboard he received a series of briefings on its role as a NATO command platform. The ship remains flexible and ready to respond in order to command and control Allied ships at sea.

The Defence Secretary will also visit Kirkenes to see the enduring Norwegian presence at the border to Russia.

Published 29 March 2022