

News story: Defence Minister hails UK-US transatlantic partnership

As part of the visit, the Minister met with the US Navy Under Secretary Thomas Modly and US Army Under Secretary Ryan McCarthy to discuss bilateral capability priorities and future areas of collaboration between the two armed forces.

This came as the Minister addressed the Heritage Foundation think-tank, where he highlighted the threats that both nations face and emphasised the vital role of Nato and the need for long-term planning and the depth of UK-US collaboration.

Addressing the Heritage Foundation, Defence Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Over the years, the deep UK-US alliance has endured through two World conflicts, the chill of the Cold War, and the continuing struggle against extremist terror. Today our forces work highly effectively together across the globe – on land and sea, in the air, space and cyberspace. We are stronger together.

Just as our Armed Forces' capabilities are effectively intertwined, so too are our industries. We are now moving even nearer the goal of full interoperability, leveraging the talent, strength and innovation of both our Defence industries to meet the challenges of the future.

In a move to reinforce stronger industrial partnerships, the Minister also met with the headliners in the American defence industry, meeting with likes of Lockheed Martin, Northrup Grumman, Boeing and General Dynamics.

The UK and US are the biggest overseas suppliers to each other's militaries and have worked closely on numerous key projects.

The most prominent of these is the F-35 fighter jet programme, with the aircraft now embarked for flight trials on HMS Queen Elizabeth as she sailed into New York just last month. Other recent examples of collaboration are the Unmanned Air Systems programme and a Common Missile Compartment for UK-US Ballistic Missile Submarines.

Both nations also play leading roles in Nato, which is vital to the transatlantic partnership and have been calling for other nations to invest more in security and to increase the readiness of their forces. By the end of 2018, eight members will be meeting the commitment of spending 2% of their GDP on defence compared with just three in 2014.

In further display of solidarity, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson recently announced that the Red Arrows are set to carry out their largest ever tour of

North America in 2019 as the UK looks to strengthen ties and sign trade deals outside of Europe.