

News story: HMS Queen Elizabeth to join NATO rapid reaction force

The Prime Minister announced today that the Royal Navy will ready the UK's largest and most advanced warship ever to join allies in forming part of NATO's major 'Readiness Initiative' when she becomes operational.

The first of the UK's Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers, together with the formidable F-35 fighter jets, will fly the flag of a Global Britain alongside NATO allies, projecting influence for peace and standing ready to fight, deliver aid and take on terrorism around the world.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I'm pleased to announce that NATO will soon be able to call on the UK's Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers and F-35 fighter jets to help tackle threats around the world.

NATO's 'Readiness Initiative' aims to improve the readiness of the alliance's forces to deploy and move within Europe and across the Atlantic to safeguard international security. The UK will look to make its aircraft carrier a key part of those plans as the country continues to play a leading role in the alliance which has been the cornerstone of its defence for 70 years.

Defence Secretary, Penny Mordaunt said:

Be it projecting influence for peace, standing ready to fight, or delivering vital aid around the world, HMS Queen Elizabeth and her sister ship HMS Prince of Wales, will fly the flag of a Global Britain. Nothing symbolises the leading role that we play in NATO more than our nation's future flagship being ready to respond to any challenge that the Alliance may face.

At the Defence Ministers' meeting in June, Allies committed, by 2020, to having 30 battalions, 30 air squadrons, and 30 naval combat vessels ready to use within 30 days. This was reinforced by Allied Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in July.

HMS Queen Elizabeth remains set to be deployed on global operations from 2021 and when HMS Prince of Wales joins her in the fleet in the near future, the UK will have one carrier available at very high readiness at all times.