

News story: UK bolsters support to NATO mission in Afghanistan

100 Welsh Guards arrived in Afghanistan last week. They travelled with Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson who was in the country for a three-day visit.

The 100 troops are the first group of the additional 440 troops the Prime Minister committed to NATO's capacity building mission in Afghanistan at the NATO Summit in July. The UK plays a leading role in NATO, and this troop uplift will make the UK the third largest contributor to Afghanistan with around 1,100 personnel.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We remain absolutely committed to building an Afghanistan that is a strong security partner for decades to come. A secure and stable Afghanistan helps keep the streets of the UK safe.

The uplift of UK personnel not only underlines our commitment to Afghanistan and regional security, but also to the Alliance that has been the cornerstone of our defence for 70 years. Thousands of our personnel stand shoulder-to-shoulder with NATO allies around the world. Those here in Afghanistan are just one example of Global Britain in action.

The additional troops will bolster the UK's existing contribution to the UK-led Kabul Security Force (KSF), which plays a critical role in enabling NATO advisors in the city to undertake engagement with the Afghan Government. They will also continue to mentor the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces who are responsible for security in the capital.

The Defence Secretary also travelled to Mazar-e-Sharif where, alongside the German Armed Forces, UK personnel are supporting the expansion of the Afghan Special Police. The force has recently illustrated its increased capability in responding to the InterContinental Hotel and Kabul Military Academy attacks. He met around 40 UK advisors who have been based in the north of the country since January 2018.

He also met President Ghani and Chief Executive Officer Abdullah Abdullah, underlining the UK commitment to a secure and stable Afghanistan.