

PM praises role of UK's Armed Forces

He will set out commitment to renew and modernise Armed Forces backed by £2.2 billion increased funding Maintaining world-class armed forces “more important than ever”

Britain's Armed Forces will be celebrated by the Prime Minister as he meets military leaders in Number 10 today (Thursday).

The Prime Minister will discuss with military chiefs about plans to invest in and modernise our Armed Forces so they are able to meet evolving global security challenges that lie ahead.

It follows the announcement that an extra £2.2 billion will be spent on defence, as set out in the Spending Round.

The settlement boosts the defence budget to almost £41.5 billion and represents an increase of 2.6% above inflation, well above the government's commitment to grow the defence budget by 0.5% above inflation every year of this parliament.

The money will allow the armed forces to prioritise key capabilities such as cyber, shipbuilding and the nuclear deterrent.

On Wednesday evening the Prime Minister hosted a reception for serving military personnel in Downing Street and on Thursday afternoon he will visit an army training ground in the south west of England to meet troops and thank them for their ongoing service.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I am a Prime Minister who will back our Armed Forces all the way. That is why we are boosting defence spending by £2.2 billion – a 2.6% increase. The recent Spending Review should leave no one in any doubt of our commitment to maintaining a world-class Armed Forces. We continue to exceed our NATO commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defence, and remain the largest NATO defence spender in Europe.

From the first day I became Prime Minister I have seen examples of the extraordinary commitment and courage shown by the men and women who defend our nation. This country can be immensely proud of their actions, some of which are not always seen by the public. Day in, day out they are serving with distinction.

Ours was the first ship from any nation to arrive in the Bahamas with urgent supplies following Hurricane Dorian. We continue to pound Daesh from the skies over Iraq and eastern Syria through strike and surveillance missions. Our troops in Estonia are supporting NATO and warding off Russian aggression. Our nuclear

submarines are continuously patrolling the seas, providing us with a nuclear deterrent every minute of every hour, as they have done for 50 years.

As the world becomes a more competitive and challenging place, maintaining a world-class armed forces is as important as ever. Defence has a vital role to play in supporting Global Britain's role in the world. It underpins the strength of our alliances and enables us to support the rules-based order in a time of international uncertainty.

I look forward to speaking to the Service Chiefs today about how we invest and modernise our armed forces – getting them 'match fit' for the global security challenges that lie ahead.

The Prime Minister will host the Chief of Defence Staff, the Heads of the Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force, the Vice Chief of Defence Staff, the Chief of Joint Forces Command and the Defence Secretary Ben Wallace for the meeting at Downing Street.

It follows a reception for more than 50 men and women who are currently serving in the Armed Forces at No10 on Wednesday evening, where the Prime Minister heard their experiences of serving their country on the front line.

The Prime Minister also hailed the news that the UK will host the next NATO leaders meeting on December 4th at The Grove Hotel in Hertfordshire. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the alliance.

He added:

NATO is the bedrock of British national defence. The principle of collective security has been essential to our safety since the Second World War. NATO is both a triumph of British diplomacy, working hand-in-glove with our friends, and the world's most successful and enduring military alliance.

The UK will continue to play a leading role in strengthening the alliance with our armed forces are at the forefront of that effort and I'm pleased that we will be hosting the next meeting of NATO leaders in Hertfordshire, marking 70 years of this vital alliance.

Increased defence spending is one of a number of commitments made by the government to support Britain's Armed Forces, recognising the vital role defence has to play in delivering a Global Britain.

Recently the government also announced:

Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace said:

In an increasingly unpredictable world the need for UK defence to secure our safety and stability is more vital than ever. Our investment in our forces ensures we can achieve strategic advantage across the globe while at the same time looking after those that sacrifice so much on our behalf.

Post Brexit, defence will play a strong part across our nation, bonding our citizens and industry in a common purpose.

The UK currently has around 13,000 troops deployed across the globe.

There are nearly 1,000 standing shoulder to shoulder with allies in Estonia and Poland on NATO's eastern flank; around 800 supporting and training the Afghan Security Forces; and over 1,000 deployed in the Gulf securing freedom of navigation, countering the narcotics trade, and combatting piracy.