

Press release: PM: Britain is unconditionally committed to the defence and security of Europe

Prime Minister Theresa May will reiterate Britain's ongoing commitment to maintaining European security as she visits British troops in Estonia.

The 800 UK soldiers stationed in Tapa are part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe. They have been at the base since April leading a NATO battlegroup alongside Estonian and French armed forces, providing deterrence in the face of increasing Russian assertiveness. They will be joined by troops from Denmark in the new year.

The Prime Minister will be joined on the visit to Tapa by President Macron of France and Estonia's Prime Minister Ratas.

She is in Estonia for a meeting of EU leaders at the Tallinn Digital Summit, where she will call for greater global cooperation to tackle the growing threat of hostile cyber activity. She will be accompanied by Ciaran Martin, CEO of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, to share his expertise on this agenda.

Speaking ahead of her visit to Estonia, the Prime Minister said:

From terrorism to cyber-crime, illegal migration to Russian aggression, the threats we face as Europeans are increasing in their scale and complexity. Now more than ever it is in all our interests to confront them together.

With the largest defence budget in Europe, a far-reaching diplomatic network, world-class security, intelligence and law enforcement services, and our position at the heart of NATO, the UK's role in Europe's defence has never been more vital.

As we prepare for Brexit, I want to build a bold, new security partnership with the EU. A partnership that reflects our shared history, promotes our common values, and maintains a secure and prosperous Europe.

NATO remains the bedrock of our collective security, and there is no clearer demonstration of the UK's unconditional commitment to Europe's defence than the 800 British troops now in Tapa, leading a NATO battlegroup and standing shoulder to shoulder with their Estonian, French and soon their Danish counterparts too.

We will continue to work with our NATO allies, our European neighbours and the EU, to support a future partnership of unprecedented breadth and depth, that will guarantee the security

and stability of the continent for generations to come.

Addressing the Tallinn Digital Summit later today, the Prime Minister will highlight recent cyber-attacks in the UK and Europe and the danger this poses to our shared security. She will urge member states to work more closely together to combat the threat to our democratic institutions, financial systems and public sectors.

As part of Britain's commitment to deepen its security partnership with Europe, the Prime Minister will offer to share UK expertise – including through the world-leading National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – to help EU nations build up their own cyber-security capability and resistance to attacks.

For instance, she will invite member states to take part in an event hosted by the NCSC next month, in the wake of recent attempts to undermine election processes in the West. Nations will come together to share information and learn from each other's experiences in order to strengthen the collective global response to this growing threat to our democracies and way of life.