

Press release: Security in the Gulf is vital to keeping Britain safe

In UAE Defence Secretary met with His Excellency Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi, Minister of State for Defence, to thank leadership for their support to UK operations

In the UAE, Gavin Williamson met with the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Mohammed bin Zayed, and his Emirati counterpart, Mohammed Ahmad Al Bowardi, reaffirming the historic and very successful defence relationship. He also commended the role the UAE, a Global Coalition partner, has played in the fight against Daesh.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our long-standing and deep relationship with our Gulf partners epitomises Britain's global outlook. Be it through our involvement in the Duqm port project in Oman or the opening of the Naval Support Facility in Bahrain, we are committed to regional security and stability.

Gulf security is our security and what happens in the Gulf has a direct impact on the security of the British public at home.

The Defence Secretary also visited personnel on board HMS Middleton and HMS Bangor, which were alongside at Port Zayed. Mr Williamson reiterated how grateful he was for the access and facilities that the UAE provides the UK. The UAE is the most visited port globally by the Royal Navy, highlighting the value Britain places on this relationship in its support to regional stability and security.

In Oman, Mr Williamson met the Minister Responsible For Defence, Badr bin Saud al Busaidi, to discuss the potential embedding of Omani officers to work and train alongside UK Armed Forces as Loan Service Personnel. It will be a unique arrangement for the UK as it does not currently have any other Loan Service Personnel embedded with our world renowned Armed Forces.

They also reviewed the work taking place at the Duqm port facilities which, in time, will host UK warships and is large enough to welcome the UK's future flagships, aircraft carriers HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales. They also discussed Exercise SAIF SAREEA 3 which will be the largest UK-Oman joint exercise for 15 years. Almost 5,500 British troops from all three services will train side by side with the Sultan's Armed Forces, sharing experiences and trialling new concepts.