

# Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace meets Japan's Prime Minister and Defence Minister

World news story

During a two-day visit to Japan, Secretary of State for Defence Ben Wallace met with Japan's Prime Minister Suga and Defence Minister Kishi and reaffirmed the UK and Japan's shared values and close partnership in defence and security ahead of the visit of the UK's Carrier Strike Group to Japan in September.



In his meeting with Prime Minister Suga, the Secretary of State emphasised the UK and Japan's common strategic interests, their commitment to stability in the region and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

During a joint press conference with Defence Minister Kishi, the Secretary of State announced the Japanese ports that elements of the Carrier Strike Group will be visiting. They will be Sasebo, Okinawa, Kure, Yokosuka, and Maizuru. Speaking to media on Monday the Secretary of State also emphasised the robust Covid-19 infection prevention and control measures on board the Carrier Strike Group. This will ensure the visit to Japan will be safe, secure and productive.

Following on from the Carrier Strike Group's inaugural deployment, the UK will permanently assign two offshore patrol vessels to the Indo-Pacific region from later this year. It will also contribute a Littoral Response Group (LRG) in the coming years, thereby demonstrating the UK's commitment to collective defence and security in the region in the decades ahead.

The Secretary of State was accompanied Admiral Antony Radakin, First Sea Lord, and Air Chief Marshal Michael Wigston, Chief of Air Staff. During the visit the Secretary of State and delegation met with senior leadership from the Japanese Self Defence Forces and the U.S Forces in Japan.

Secretary of State for Defence, Ben Wallace said:

The UK's defence relationship with Japan is the closest it has been in the last century.

Following exercises with the Japan Maritime Self Defence Force in the Gulf of Aden and in the waters off Japan, the upcoming visit of the UK-led Carrier Strike Group to five ports across the country is a clear demonstration of our commitment to maintaining regional security and upholding the rules-based international order with Japan.

Julia Longbottom, British Ambassador to Japan said:

The visit to Japan by senior members of the UK's armed forces and the Secretary of State represents the ever closer partnership between Japan and the UK and our commitment to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The UK is committed to working with Japan to support regional stability and to meet shared global challenges, such as cyber security, combatting global pandemics and ensuring the global systems that promote the free flow of trade and knowledge are strengthened and defended.

ENDS

Published 20 July 2021