

Secretary of State Pays First Visit to RAF in Romania

The Defence Secretary has today visited Royal Air Force personnel deployed to Romania as part of the NATO Southern Air Policing mission in the country.

The detachment of four Typhoon fighter jets from 3 Fighter Squadron has been based in Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in south east Romania since May. Deployed for up to four months, they are working alongside the Romanian Air Force to police the skies over the Black Sea.

Noting the partnership between the United Kingdom and Romania, Sir Michael said:

"The UK is stepping up in its support for NATO's collective defence from the north to the south of the alliance. Through this deployment, RAF planes will be ready to secure NATO airspace and provide reassurance to allies in the Black Sea region."

The Southern Air Policing mission is the first time that NATO has deployed aircraft to reassure allies in the Black Sea region, with the UK being the first country in rotation.

The visit was part of a 2-day tour of Romania on 14 and 15 June which also included Exercise NOBLE JUMP based at the Training Centre in Cincu where a thousand British soldiers are taking part in the NATO military exercise.



Defence Minister Gabriel Les was also present at the airbase where he in turn addressed the gathering of British and Romanian Air Force personnel, saying:

"We have great appreciation for the deployment of Royal Air Force aircraft in Romania as part of the process to implement

the

Action Plan for increasing NATO's operational capacity and as part of our Strategic Partnership".

"The

presence in Romania of the Typhoon aircraft, which are some of the very best fighter aircraft, is an excellent opportunity for joint training and action and

contributes to increasing air defence capacity for reaction and deterrence as

well as to strengthening interoperability between the two military forces".

The EAW

comprises four Typhoon aircraft from No. 3 (Fighter) Squadron from RAF Coningsby in Lincolnshire supported by around 150 personnel drawn from stations

across Britain.

Southern Air

Policing is part of NATO's Assurance Measures introduced in 2014 to demonstrate

the collective resolve of Allies, the defensive nature of NATO, and to deter Russia from aggression against Allies.

The RAF aircraft deployed to Romania are part of

the UK's contribution to reassurance measures to ensure the operational capability of NATO's eastern flank. The eAP mission demonstrates NATO's flexible capabilities and readiness, underlining the commitment of Allies to each other.

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