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18 Mar 2017



Uncertainty over Scottish independence is putting jobs and investment in the North Sea at risk, a new report from a respected energy consultancy has said today.

Edinburgh-based analysts Wood Mackenzie (WoodMac) have said that Nicola Sturgeon's fresh drive for separation could deter investors from committing to new projects.

The report states that prospects for the future tax take are being overshadowed by questions about who will subsidise decommissioning liabilities.

While WoodMac points to 11 billion barrels of oil equivalent (boe) lying in Scottish waters, there is also an obligation to break-up the majority of fields, equating to 80% of the total UK decommissioning bill.

The report adds: "Critically, political uncertainty could deter investors from committing to new projects. With new investment and jobs at risk, and the complicating factors of boundaries and decommissioning tax relief, much is at stake."

Scottish Conservative Energy spokesman Alexander Burnett said:

"It is clear from this report that the currently fragile recovery we are seeing in the North Sea could be put at risk by Nicola Sturgeon's reckless and irresponsible drive for independence.

"Wood Mackenzie have correctly pointed out that the uncertainty caused by the looming threat of a repeat vote on separation could deter crucial investment in the sector.

"The SNP spent part of yesterday's conference in Aberdeen bemoaning the apparent lack of support from the UK Government, which has delivered £2.3 billion in tax breaks in the last three years.

"Far from supporting the industry, the SNP's obsession with independence

could cost jobs, reduce investment and cause huge confusion for the decommissioning market.

“Nicola Sturgeon does not have public support for a referendum, and she is now being warned that it will be damaging for the economy. She should drop these plans immediately.”

[News story: UK troops arrive in Estonia for major NATO deployment](#)

Soldiers from the 5th Battalion The Rifles Battlegroup (5 RIFLES), including members of an Armoured Engineer Squadron, Military Police Detachment, Artillery Group and Port Task Group, arrived at Amari airbase last night.

They were welcomed by Estonia’s Defence Minister Margus Tsahkna, having flown from RAF Brize Norton by Voyager aircraft.

The 120 soldiers are fundamental to setting up a UK headquarters in the country before the rest of the UK deployment arrives next month, increasing the total number of troops in Estonia to around 800.



Soldiers from the 5th Battalion The Rifles Battlegroup arrive at Amari

airbase, Estonia.

The UK is taking a leading role in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, alongside several other contributing nations. The deployments are designed to assure NATO allies of the mutual commitment to collective European security.

Working alongside the UK forces this year will be French personnel, and from next year, Danish partners. All are there at the request of the Estonian Government. The Battlegroup will provide a proportionate, defensive, and combat capable force to defend our NATO ally and deter any form of hostile activity against the Alliance.



An AS90 and a Challenger 2 tank being loaded onto cargo ship in the port of Emden, Germany, before deployment to Estonia.

The UK-led Estonia Battlegroup is one of four NATO multinational deployments to the eastern part of the Alliance. Other nations are deploying to Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the last of which will include 150 UK personnel, on a persistent, rotational basis.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

In the face of an increasingly assertive Russia, NATO is stepping up its commitment to collective defence. British troops will play a leading role in Estonia and support our US allies in Poland, as part of wider efforts to defend NATO.

Our rising defence budget means we can support those deployments in

the long-term and strengthen our commitment to European security.

Commanding Officer of 5 Rifles Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wilson added:

The UK and Estonia have a long and proud history of serving together, including in Afghanistan, so it is an honour to lead 5 RIFLES on this deployment as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. My soldiers are looking forward to again be working, training and exercising alongside their Estonian counterparts.

This week, around 300 UK vehicles have also departed to Estonia, including Warrior infantry fighting vehicles, Challenger 2 tanks and AS90 self-propelled artillery pieces. These vehicles, loaded onto a Roll-On-Roll-Off ferry, are currently on their way and set to arrive towards the middle of next week. French armoured vehicles, including tanks, are also due to arrive in Estonia via train after being loaded yesterday.



Personnel from the 5th Battalion The Rifles depart from RAF Brize Norton for Estonia.

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[Dundee City Transmission Cable Replacement Project – an update](#)



From Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks – regarding the high voltage cable replacement project – area from Lochee Road to Logie Avenue :

“As you’ll be aware the Dundee City Transmission Cable Replacement project commenced on 6 March 2017 and is progressing according to programme. Below is an update in relation to the works and roads affected by these as at w/c 20 March :

- **Lochee Road, Joint Bay 1/2 – Road remains open to traffic who are able to pass with care**
- **Lochee Road, Joint Bay 2/3 – Traffic management system sees the sequencing of traffic lights staggered to accommodate single direction traffic as at 13/03**
- **Fleucher Street, Joint Bay 3/4 – Fleuchar Street will close w/c 20 March. A diversion is in place and will take approximately 1 minute by car. Local access for residents, pedestrians, cyclists etc will be maintained during this closure.**

I’d also like to give you a bit of notice regarding abnormal load deliveries to our lay down site at Brown Street. There will be cable drum deliveries to this site between 29 – 31 March where parking at Brown Street between Douglas Street and Miln Street will be temporarily suspended during short periods of time.

Traffic will be managed by Contraflow who will remain on the ground during these periods. I am currently awaiting confirmation of the vehicles' route from the Dock and also timings, when I am in receipt of this information I will be certain to pass it on to you."

I will keep residents updated as I hear further from Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks.

[Mr. Nicolas Sarkozy, former President of France, meets PM](#)

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