

News story: Defence Secretary: Britain committed to leading European security

Sir Michael told the annual Munich Security Conference that while Britain is leaving the European Union, the UK would not be stepping back from its role in European security.

Britain's leadership this year is demonstrated by two new major commitments to the NATO Alliance:

- Leading NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, otherwise known as the 'spearhead force'. This UK-led NATO Brigade is ready and willing to respond to any threat the Alliance faces and shows how NATO is strengthening its collective defence and deterrence.
- Deploying a battle group of around 800 personnel to lead in Estonia NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, another way in which NATO is stepping up to deter threats. Britain will deploy as part of the battle group the United States is leading in Poland, with over 100 troops.

The Defence Secretary also met with his German counterpart, Ursula von der Leyen, where he discussed the unprecedented level of cooperation between the two countries. Sir Michael also welcomed Germany's commitment to increase its defence spending.

Sir Michael, along with the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, yesterday [launched](#) Britain's new strategy for engaging more internationally in defence activity.

The International Defence Engagement Strategy is the way in which all defence activity, short of combat operations, work abroad to prevent conflict, build stability and gain influence internationally.

Speaking at the Munich Secretary Conference, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Britain is committed to Europe's security, and we're stepping up our engagement internationally. Whether defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, deploying with our NATO Allies to deter threats, or engaging globally to help countries develop their security, Britain is playing a major role – and will continue to do so.

The Defence Secretary also confirmed that Britain would keep the momentum up in the fight against Daesh. In Iraq and Syria, the RAF are flying day and night to defeat Daesh.

The RAF hit over 300 targets as part of recent operations to liberate eastern Mosul, and is now focussing efforts on the approaches to the west of the city, where it is expected the liberation operation will begin within days.

Environment minister urges crack-down on high-emission vehicles

China's environment minister has urged strict monitoring and crack-down on automobiles with excessive exhaust emissions to improve air quality.

Emissions from mobile sources, such as heavy diesel trucks and old cars, make up a large part of air pollution in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, said Chen Jining, minister of environmental protection, while inspecting an auto emission management center in Beijing Friday.

The Chinese capital is working to build a city-level environmental monitoring system over automobiles to comprehensively control emissions from mobile sources.

Chen called for accelerating the establishment of a national regulation platform for automobile emissions with a technical support system, as well as a network that monitors high-emission vehicles all the time and from all angles.

He said drivers or owners of vehicles with excessive exhaust emissions should be severely punished in accordance with the law and relevant punishment details will be made public.

Automobile emissions contribute 31.1 percent of Beijing's average PM2.5 density. With a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers, the particulate matter has been a primary factor behind hazardous smog.

INSV Tarini Inducted – All Woman Crew Scheduled to Sail her around the Globe Commencing August 2017

The Indian Navy's second ocean going sailboat Tarini was inducted, in presence of host of dignitaries at a glittering ceremony at INS Mandovi Boat Pool. Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of Naval Staff along with

[News story: Defence Secretary calls on NATO to be fitter, faster, more agile](#)

Attending the annual Munich Security Conference, Sir Michael said the Alliance should not wait for another crisis before it modernises itself.

Calling for an ambitious programme of change, the Defence Secretary outlined three areas for a fitter, faster, more agile NATO:

- Greater flexibility for NATO's top commanders, including the power to move more staff resources around to meet current and future threats.
- Less duplication – the Alliance has five financial control centres.
- Increased coherence – Sir Michael outlined that while improvements were being made, particularly in the merging of intelligence structures, more needed to be done to break down silos.

Describing Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 as a "wake up call" for NATO, the Defence Secretary said NATO members needed to invest more on defence and called on Allies to increase spending every year until the 2% Defence Investment Pledge, agreed at the UK hosted NATO summit in 2014, is met.

At the same time NATO should strengthen its relationships with other organisations, particularly the EU, while avoiding duplication.

Defence Secretary also called on NATO to project stability beyond its borders, by working globally to improve the security areas of fragile nations.

Speaking last night at the conference, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We want a fitter, faster, more agile NATO. This means more spending on defence by all the Allies, faster, more flexible decision making, and stronger partnerships.

Britain yesterday [launched](#) its International Defence Engagement Strategy, which contained a new plan for how the UK will strengthen cooperation with Allies and partners, allowing Britain to collectively pack a more powerful punch.

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