

News story: Defence Secretary wishes troops Merry Christmas while in Poland on NATO visit

Gavin Williamson said the UK personnel working in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) deployment reflected Britain's global outlook, unconditional commitment to collective Euro-Atlantic security and further highlighted NATO as the cornerstone of UK defence. These UK personnel are part of the US-led eFP battlegroup in Poland, while the UK continues to lead our own eFP battlegroup in Estonia.

The Defence Secretary travelled to Poland with the Prime Minister and other Cabinet members to sign a Defence and Security Cooperation Treaty at the Inter-Governmental Consultations in Warsaw, deepening the close UK-Polish relationship.

He then travelled on to Orzysz, also in Poland, meeting around 150 UK personnel from the Light Dragoon's, who have been working closely with forces from the US, Poland, Romania and Croatia.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We live in a world where the threats and dangers we face are constant, evolving and increasingly challenging. We have to be highly professional and deeply committed to counter the intensifying aggression aimed at Britain and our allies.

That is why I'm so grateful to our brave men and women in the Armed Forces, working around the clock to keep us safe while so many of us spend time with friends and family over the Christmas period.

The United Kingdom will always play a global and leading role in major alliances such as NATO. I'm proud to have met our inspirational personnel here in Poland making such an important difference alongside key friends and partners like Poland and the United States.

The Light Cavalry Squadron, who will be deployed over the festive season, are supporting Polish forces to enhance NATO's deterrence posture, while benefiting from training alongside US and Romanian allies, building a strong multi-national battlegroup.

Colonel Giles Harris DSO MBE, Commander CABRIT, said:

As we celebrate Christmas and New Year's, I hope everyone deployed on OP CABRIT in Estonia and Poland can reflect on how much has been

achieved this year in support of NATO and our partners.

Their efforts and commitment have been outstanding and I am extremely grateful for all they, and those back in the UK, have done in support of the mission. The positive impact of our presence here should not be underestimated.

I would also like to thank the families and friends at home too – as ever, they are hugely important in our success. So from all of us deployed on operations in the Baltic states and Poland, we wish you a happy Christmas and New Year.

While in Poland he also praised thousands of Armed Forces personnel working in many other operations around the globe over the Christmas period. More widely, more than 5,000 sailors, soldiers, airmen and marines will be working over the festive period, involved in 25 operations in more than 30 countries ranging from Iraq to the South Atlantic.

As well as around 150 UK personnel working in Poland around 800 British personnel are deployed on the UK led eFP deployment in Estonia. Further afield, currently around 1,000 people are working to fight Daesh and train the local security forces from locations in Iraq and the wider Middle East as well as from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus. In the Caribbean, RFA Mounts Bay joins other Royal Navy warships also deployed over the festive period.

UK Air Component Commander, Air Commodore Roddy Dennis, based in the Middle East alongside NATO allies, had this message for everyone at home in the UK and across the globe:

On behalf of all the personnel from 83 EAG currently deployed on Op SHADER and Op KIPION in the Middle East, I would like to send season's greetings to everyone in the UK and abroad. Even though we are away from our homes, families and friends this festive season, we will all be celebrating Christmas in traditional Armed Forces' fashion together with personnel from across the Coalition.

I would like to thank everyone under my command for their service and everyone at home for the support they continue to give us, our mission would be impossible without it. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Since 1969 the UK has had a submarine on patrol for every minute of every day, providing the UK's nuclear deterrent and this Christmas is no different.

In the South Atlantic, over 1000 personnel are stationed in the Falkland Islands. In Afghanistan, troops from the Army and other Services are training Afghan National Security Forces.

News story: Defence Secretary meets Canadian counterpart to further strengthen ties

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has met with Canada's Minister of National Defence, Harjit Sajjan, to further strengthen the historic relationship between the UK and Canada.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The UK and Canada have enjoyed a close-knit relationship for more than a century and we have further reinforced this bond, discussing the wide range of issues we face today.

At a time when our nations battle intensifying threats on numerous fronts, we must continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with Canada and all of our allies, to ensure the safety of our people.

The two nations have maintained a close alliance on a wide range of security issues for decades, and are uniquely linked. Both are members of G7, the Five Eyes Intelligence Community, NATO and the Commonwealth.

At the forefront of this bond is the posting of UK troops at British Army Training Unit Suffield (BATUS), in Canada, which will celebrate 50 years of operation in 2021.

Both countries have also expressed a desire to further reinforce their commitments to international diplomacy, and co-hosted the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver last month.

The UK Defence Secretary also praised Canada for tripling its training effort in the fight against Daesh, as well as increasing their surveillance and intelligence in support of the counter-Daesh coalition, which both countries are key members of.

Along with the Netherlands and France, the UK and Canada also worked together to form the Multinational Caribbean Co-ordination Cell during Operation Ruman, providing aid to those caught up in the devastating aftermath of Hurricane Irma and Hurricane Maria in September.

News story: Sea Ceptor missile test firing complete at sea

The second ship fitted with Sea Ceptor has also conducted a successful firing to verify the weapon system upgrade.

The new missile defence system will provide UK personnel with a powerful shield against airborne targets – including hostile combat jets and helicopters, as well enemy missiles travelling at supersonic speeds.

The completion of the firing trials from Type 23 frigate HMS Argyll means Sea Ceptor can proceed to the next stage of the acceptance into service with the Royal Navy.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

In the face of intensifying global threats, cutting-edge systems like Sea Ceptor will keep the UK safe. These successful trials from HMS Argyll mark a major milestone towards the introduction of this world-class missile system into service for the Royal Navy.

Work to develop and install Sea Ceptor across the Royal Navy is also boosting British industry, supporting 600 jobs in the Bristol, Stevenage and Bolton areas.



The firing trials at sea included two missiles being fired at the same time.

The first firings of Sea Ceptor were conducted from HMS Argyll at the Hebrides range off the coast of Scotland and involved firing the system to assess its performance against a range of scenarios.

Two sets of trials were conducted by Defence, Equipment and Support (DE&S) and supported by a number of other organisations, lasting around two weeks each.

During the firings the system was first tested against single aerial targets. This was followed by more demanding tests, including a single target engaged by two missiles and a twin firing (two targets, each engaged by a single missile at the same time).

An installation test firing from HMS Westminster – the second ship fitted with Sea Ceptor – took place in November, with each of the Type 23 ships due to carry out installation test firings in due course.

Lieutenant Nick Andrews, HMS Westminster's Anti-Air-Warfare Officer, said:

HMS Westminster managed to explore the real potential of the system during her training and to say it is a real game changer is an understatement. Unlike its predecessor, the system is capable of defending ships other than Westminster herself. Whether it's engaging multiple air threats or fast incoming attack craft, Sea

Ceptor represents a massive capability upgrade for the Type 23 frigate.

Designed and manufactured by MBDA in the UK, Sea Ceptor is being fitted to replace the Sea Wolf weapon system on the Type 23 frigates and will provide the same capability for the Royal Navy's future Type 26 Frigates.

Sea Ceptor defends escort vessels within a maritime task group, such as for the new Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers, and with [HMS Argyll due to deploy to Japan next year](#), the trials successfully showcased the short range capabilities of the new defence system. Another Type 23, [HMS Sutherland, is due to deploy to Australia in the New Year](#).



HMS Argyll will deploy to Japan next year, fitted with the Sea Ceptor missile system.

The system uses a new UK-developed missile, the Common Anti-air Modular Missile or CAMM, that is capable of reaching speeds of up to three times the speed of sound, and will have the ability to deal with multiple targets simultaneously, protecting an area of around 500 square miles (1,300 square kilometres) over land or sea.

Sea Ceptor supports around 600 MBDA jobs and its supply chain in key locations across the UK such as Bristol, Stevenage and Bolton.

Richard Smart, Director Weapons, for the MOD's procurement

organisation Defence Equipment and Support, which is based at MOD Abbey Wood in Bristol, said:

These trials are a significant step in getting the Sea Ceptor weapon system to acceptance and a great example of how important live trials are in helping us to understand a new military capability before using it in operational service. The success of the trials is testimony to the hard work put in by the DE&S project team and the working relationship they have with industry.

The results of the firings are now going through extensive analysis; our assessment so far is positive and shows how Sea Ceptor is capable of protecting both the ship which fired it and other ships in its task group, which could include the UK's two new Queen Elizabeth Aircraft Carriers.

News story: Export and SME support leads policy refresh which will keep our industry and military as 'the envy of the world', Defence Secretary announces

The update is primarily focused on: considering the wider economic, international and security implications of defence programmes at an earlier stage, creating the conditions for the industry to be internationally competitive, innovative and secure, as well as continuing to make it easier to do business with defence, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

As UK industry's single largest customer, spending £18.7bn of the rising defence budget with British companies last year and directly supporting over 121,000 jobs right across the country, the Defence Secretary outlined the importance of the partnership to both the industry and the security of the country in light of the refresh.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

As Britain faces intensifying threats, it is crucial that our brave Armed Forces personnel have the warships, jets and missiles they need to defend the country.

British businesses play a vital role in equipping our troops with the tools they need to keep us safe.

We are British industry's biggest customer and we are committed to exporters and small and medium sized businesses to ensure they and our military remains the envy of the world.

The Policy is based on three key-strands. The first focuses on improving the way defence delivers wider economic and international value, as well as national security objectives. To kick-start this, the department will pilot a new approach to analyse potential ways of delivering these benefits, setting evidence-based objectives for higher-value business cases.

The second strand aims to help UK industry to be internationally competitive, innovative and secure. The MOD continually bangs the drum for Britain's world-leading industry around the world, with [the Defence Secretary in Qatar](#) earlier this month to agree the biggest export deal for the Typhoon aircraft of the decade, worth around £6bn. Prior to that deal, the UK won defence orders worth £5.9bn last year, equating to a 9% share of the global export market.

The [National Shipbuilding Strategy launched earlier this year](#) also focused heavily on export potential, with the new Type 31e class of frigate set to be designed to not only meet the needs of the Royal Navy, but also for the export market in mind right from the beginning. As part of those plans, the Government committed to working closely with industry to provide the certainty and support the need to become internationally competitive, and that early focus on exports will trail blaze the way for other big defence projects following the refresh.

For the first time the department is introducing a framework for standardised intellectual property arrangements for contracts co-funded by the MOD and industry, which were previously dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The department has been consulting with industry on new contract conditions allowing for more open support contracts to competition.

And that also relates to the third stand of the policy: making it easier for companies to do business with defence. This is particularly aimed at innovators, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and non-traditional defence suppliers.

The MOD has already made strides in this area, which has seen the department's direct spend with smaller businesses increase by over 10%. The MOD has launched a Supplier Portal, bringing together for the first time a range of useful information for new and prospective suppliers in one place.

A new Twitter channel, @defenceproc, is also being used to provide regular updates to suppliers on opportunities and events that the MOD is supporting, whilst the department also launched two simplified, plain English short-form contracts for use in lower value less complex procurements last year, reducing the existing baseline terms and conditions from 18 pages to three.

An appropriate venue for the launch, the UK Defence Solutions Centre is making it easier for British firms of all sizes to do international business, boosting their exports, the national prosperity and global security. An innovation showcase at the event saw various businesses exhibit their defence solutions, including:

- Social Network Analysis, Counting Labs: Real time, rapid response software system to inform automatically about emergency events from social media by automatically assessing the veracity of associated rumours.
- Ultra-lightweight optics, Glyndwr: Low size, weight and power optics for high altitude pseudo satellite and small satellite applications.
- Infrared Solutions, Amethyst: High performance infrared detectors for the stand-off detection of explosives and chemical agents.
- Oxbotica: Autonomous vehicle technology for last mile resupply.



A three-pronged refresh to defence's Industrial Policy has been unveiled by Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson at the UK Defence Solutions Centre in Farnborough today. Crown copyright.

The Industrial Policy refresh follows a commitment made in the Strategic Defence and Security Review of 2015 and is closely allied with the

Government's wider Industrial Strategy which was launched last month. That strategy sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK.

ADS Chief Executive Paul Everitt said:

The UK's defence industry makes a vital contribution to both our national security and our economic prosperity. The industrial policy refresh set out by the Defence Secretary today makes positive steps that can develop and strengthen the important partnership between government and the industry.

Defence companies across the UK will welcome the Government's commitment to earlier consideration of the economic impact of defence programmes, support for UK defence exports and innovation, and measures to make it easier for small companies to access defence contracts.

Defence Growth Partnership Co-Chair Allan Cook said:

I am delighted the Secretary of State for Defence has chosen to launch the Government's defence industrial policy refresh at the UK Defence Solutions Centre (DSC). He has seen how the DSC is helping to facilitate innovation and develop new capabilities for the defence industry in the UK, and for our international partners.

The Defence Growth Partnership (DGP) has made tremendous progress since its launch and we are looking forward to continuing to work more closely with our colleagues at the Ministry of Defence, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and the Department for International Trade to support UK prosperity and our national security.

[News story: Defence Secretary praises personnel keeping Britain safe over Christmas](#)

Gavin Williamson met members of the Household Cavalry at Horse Guards in central London, as they make preparations for their ceremonial duties across the festive period.

As well as providing the Queen's Life Guard for the official entrance to the

Royal Palaces, and at Horse Guards, the same regiment was mobilised on London's streets after this summer's Westminster Bridge terror attack in support of the Metropolitan Police.

The Defence Secretary toured their historic Whitehall home with Colonel Crispin Lockhart, Chief of Staff for London District, after witnessing troops preparing their horses for guard duty.

While duty continues at home, more than 5,000 Armed Forces personnel will be working around the globe to help keep Britain safe. UK troops are involved in 25 operations in 30 countries. Around 1,000 people are working to fight Daesh and train the local security forces from locations in Iraq and the wider Middle East, as well as from RAF Akrotiri, Cyprus. In the Caribbean, RFA Mounts Bay joins other Royal Navy warships deployed elsewhere over the festive period.

The Defence Secretary himself is due to travel to Poland shortly, where he will meet personnel on operations with NATO partners including the US. He said:

We live in a world where threats are constant and increasing, and that means we have to be professional, be dutiful and be committed. Our enemies do not go on holiday at Christmas so our Armed Forces remain vigilant.

I am so grateful to the brave men and women of our Armed Forces for providing that commitment, working to keep us safe while so many of us relax over Christmas. From here in central London to the seas of the South Atlantic, thousands of our people are making a sacrifice which should be warmly recognised by all of us.

In addition to operations in the Middle East and in the Caribbean, soldiers, sailors and airmen are working in locations ranging from Estonia to east Africa, and since 1969 the UK has had submariners on patrol for every minute of every day, providing the UK's nuclear deterrent.

In the South Atlantic, over 1,000 personnel are stationed in the Falkland Islands, while in Afghanistan, troops from the Army and other services are training the Afghan National Security Forces.