

[News story: UK Defence companies step up globally at Aero India 2017](#)

Mrs Baldwin, the Minister for Defence Procurement, joins 20 UK companies at the [aerospace exhibition](#) held at Air Force Station Yelahanka. Showcasing some of the most innovative technology in the defence, aviation and security sectors, these cutting edge businesses will be forging long-lasting industrial partnerships and joint ventures with Indian companies.

The visit builds on the [Defence and International Security Partnership \(DISP\)](#) agreed in November 2015.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The UK and India have much to offer one another in defence: from manufacturing collaboration and simplified export controls, to military cooperation, training and research partnerships.

As Britain steps up globally, we will work together with India to build knowledge, security and prosperity through a close industrial, military and economic partnership.

Mrs Baldwin is accompanied by the British High Commissioner to India, Dominic Asquith; Lieutenant General Mark Poffley, Deputy Chief of Defence Staff for Military Capability; and Sophie Lane Regional Director for India in the Department of International Trade's Defence and Security Organisation (DSO).

The UK has a cutting-edge range of world class products across the air, land, maritime and security sectors, and Mrs Baldwin called on UK and Indian companies to develop and sustain long term industrial partnerships, to meet the challenges of the future and launch new products into the global marketplace.

[Read Harriett Baldwin's speech to the 'Make In India' Conference.](#)

[News story: The Armed Forces Covenant working on the ground through Eastern England VAPC](#)

If you have served in our armed forces, your regional [Veterans Advisory and Pensions Committees](#) are ready to help.

These committees are independent non-departmental bodies of the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and are made up of experienced volunteers who have an interest in the welfare of ex-service people. Formerly known as the War Pensions Committees, they advise and liaise with veterans, their families and relevant organisations on their needs, issues and general welfare matters.

A large part of their responsibility is to raise awareness and ensure implementation of the [Armed Forces Covenant](#).

Here is one example of how the Eastern England VAPC assisted one young man in Cambridgeshire. Penny Kingham JP (one of our brilliant VAPC members in the East of England) had been approached by a young man who is in the process of leaving the army, although still currently serving. He had sustained an injury whilst serving and unfortunately now has to walk with a stick. He was having great difficulty in obtaining registration at his local doctors surgery. He became very frustrated and reminded them of the covenant. They said they were at full capacity and were therefore unable to see him at the surgery.

Penny had asked what we could do to get help and in consultation with the Chairman of the Eastern VAPC, Jonathan Jelley MBE JP and Veterans UK, it was felt that we had to explain to him that the covenant was not designed to give those serving or who have served advantage in social provision, but rather more to ensure equality and no disadvantage because of military service.

With that, Penny then relayed this information back to the young man and his mother and showed them the precise relevant part of the covenant which they copied. She suggested to them that they go back to the surgery to explain.

Armed with this, they did indeed return to the surgery concerned to calmly explain the full situation. It seems that the young soldier had been registered with the surgery since childhood. His wife and his own child continue to be registered at the surgery. They explained that he had only left the surgery when joining the army and now wanted to return. Upon hearing this, the Practice Manager became involved and agreed that had he not joined the army, he would still have been registered and therefore under the covenant they took him back onto their list.

What an excellent demonstration of where the covenant can help and how VAPCs can help to ensure favorable outcomes on the ground. This military family although unprepared to make any public comment were delighted with the outcome. This was due to Penny Kingham JP acting in her capacity as an Eastern England VAPC member with a clear sense of purpose and commitment. As Penny said:

If it helps just one more person it will be worth the effort.

If you or someone you know is a veteran who needs help then please do contact your local [VAPC](#).

Speech: Minister Harriett Baldwin's address to the Make In India Conference

It's an absolute honour to be back here in India speaking at the Make in India Conference.

And it's great to be in Bengaluru –the aviation capital of India. I was excited to learn that almost two thirds of India's aerospace Industry is concentrated here in Karnataka and I'm hugely looking forward to seeing the best of it for myself when the Aero India 2017 Air Show starts here tomorrow.

What a great way to mark my first visit to India as Minister for Defence Procurement –and I look forward to many more engagements to come.

Collaborative Past

But whilst this trip is a first for me as Defence Minister – I'm very conscious it fits into an ambitious agenda of collaboration between our two countries, exchanging ideas, expertise and technology that really produces a benefit for our two countries, but also globally.

We have fed off each other from business and cuisine to cricket...a game that we might have invented in the UK but one that you've unequivocally cornered the market in.

Which makes me wonder...how can we persuade Virat Kohli to become a fast jet pilot instead?

It goes without saying that our two nations enjoy a strong relationship: The UK diplomatic network in India is one of the largest in the World.

India is the third largest investor in the UK, whilst the UK is the largest G20 Investor in India. In fact one in 20 private sector jobs in India is in a UK company.

And India/UK bilateral trade in goods and services was an impressive £17.5billion in 2015 and growing at 3 per cent a year.

Just last Thursday the Indian Civil Aviation Minister and UK Aviation Minister signed a new deal to boost tourism and trade between Britain and India.

And of course our close bond was demonstrated at the highest levels in November, when our Prime Minister came to India on her first bilateral visit outside Europe.

Collaborative Present

But perhaps some of the best examples of our valuable bilateral partnership can be seen in the Defence Aerospace Sector.

The UK has been a partner of the Indian defence aero sector since the very beginning – giving us an unrivalled pedigree when it comes to the transfer and exchange of aero technology and skills between our countries. British aero companies, many of whom are now part of BAE Systems, have been active in India for almost one hundred years; and Rolls-Royce was among the first to work with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) in the early days.

In recent years, HAL has built over 100 Jaguars and nearly as many Hawks with the assistance of BAE Systems powered by Rolls Royce engines –and a relationship that as we've just heard continues today and one that I hope will flourish.

Meanwhile, both Rolls Royce and BAE Systems have explored or established joint ventures with Indian partners, to deliver support to the their products in India.

And I am delighted to announce and welcome today a joint venture between MBDA and L&T, a perfect example of the UK's willingness to invest in Indian Industry.

But what really excites me is not our collaborative past or present, but our future –which brings me to my main point today and indeed the point of your conference.

Collaborative Future

What makes the UK the ideal 'Make In India' partner in the Defence Aerospace domain is our nation's collaborative potential.

The opportunities are enormous. And we'll get a glimpse of them this week when we see BAE Systems and HAL unveil their Advanced Hawk Ground Demonstrator at Aero India 2017.

And there's more where that came from –with huge opportunities for India and the UK to work together on the Advanced Multi-role Combat Aircraft (AMCA) Engine as well the Starstreak Missile.

These are the perfect examples of the next stage of Make in India –industry working together across borders to design and manufacture new technology rather than simply transferring it from one country to another.

New technology that will not only offer both partners defence benefits, but that will create export opportunities and joint economic growth and jobs.

These are the types of projects that really excite us in the UK –because in this increasingly complex and competitive world, the difference between surviving and thriving will be nations' willingness to pool their resources.

Not just its critical technologies, but the innovative thinking, the skills and intellectual capital that drive them. And the good news is that our two nations are creating the mechanisms to do just that.

Mechanisms for Future Success

Our Capability Partnerships across the land air and maritime domains are giving our two nations an unprecedented opportunity: To develop a truly productive defence relationship through partnering on a range of strategic capabilities – including Aircraft Carriers, Frigates and Armoured Vehicles.

Underpinning those partnerships is our Defence Equipment Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding – an agreement that we're in the process of refreshing and expanding...moving it away from simply looking at transactions and towards genuine joint capability development.

And shortly our Secretary of State for Defence, my boss, will travel to India to sign that refreshed Memorandum of Understanding as well as chair our nations' annual Strategic Defence Dialogue: a dialogue that will build on the progress we've made to date in our Capability Partnerships.

Finally, but no less crucially, our countries are enjoying a close Defence Science and Technology relationship that is yielding results – one that has seen our two world class Defence research and development bodies: DSTL in the UK and DRDO in India –working closely alongside each other to distil ideas into reality...ideas that will ensure we can maintain our critical edge on the global stage.

This ambitious programme comes at a point when we are aligning even more closely, according with political and economic dynamics in our two countries and in the regions in which we are operating.

Just at the very moment when you are inviting the world to 'Make in India'—and specifically today to "Make in Karnataka"—we in the UK are expressing our desire to be a more global Britain –an outward facing nation – one that champions business, innovation and free trade around the world.

As our Prime Minister Theresa May said when she met Prime Minister Modi in November: "More trade, more investment and fewer barriers between our two countries will make us all more prosperous, peaceful and secure. And with this unique partnership there is so much potential for us to advance those things."

So yes, the UK may be leaving the EU, but we are stepping up our role in the world. I'm proud that the UK economy, the fastest growing major economy in Europe, is the most diverse on earth.

Conclusion

So, there you have it.

The UK Government and UK Industry stand ready, hand in hand, to work as your partners.

India and the UK are not just as strong, but indeed are an unbeatable combination.

Time and time again, we've proved our ability to innovate, develop, make and grow together.

And it's my – and my Government's – ambition to see our partnership become stronger and more successful than ever before.

So, I hope my visit here today will play its small part in achieving just that...

Helping us to become more secure and more prosperous...

Enabling us to realise our shared potential...

And allowing us to soar ever higher into the skies of our shared future.

News story: Britain, coalition and Iraqi forces to maintain momentum in campaign against Daesh, Defence Secretary says

Speaking in Iraq, where local Iraqi and Coalition forces recently scored a major victory in the fight against Daesh in eastern Mosul, Sir Michael welcomed the progress made in defeating Daesh in Iraq.

Sir Michael saw how Britain's commitment to training Iraqi forces, which was stepped up last year is having an effect in the fight against Daesh. Numbers of Iraqi Security Forces trained by UK and Coalition personnel has increased threefold since October 2016, with around 3,000 Iraqi forces now being trained every month, 10,000 troops have been trained since the end of October 2016, increasing the Iraqi force's skills and ability to defeat Daesh.

With operations to clear the western approaches to Mosul already underway, Sir Michael met with the Prime Minister, President and Defence Minister of Iraq, and the Prime Minister and other representatives of the Kurdish Regional Government of Iraq, to take review campaign progress and planning

During his visit, Sir Michael also met with UK personnel training Iraqi security forces. Britain leads the Coalition's training programme in Iraq, and so far has helped to train nearly 40,000 troops. The training in

countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) is proving to be vital, as Daesh have booby trapped many parts of eastern Mosul during its occupation. Iraqi forces have been using their training to dispose of these crude devices, allowing their forces to advance and civilians to safely return to their homes. This training will also prove essential when forces move into the heavily mined and densely populated neighbourhoods of western Mosul.

The liberation of eastern Mosul marked a major victory for Iraqi forces, who Sir Michael praised for their patient and deliberate operation, taking care to minimise the risk to civilians. The RAF also played an important role in the Iraqi victory, providing sustained close air support to Iraqi troops. RAF Reaper aircraft played a particularly vital role, delivering precision attacks on Daesh extremists engaged in street fighting, while also using its advanced sensors to alert Iraqi ground forces to the presence of civilians.

Residents in eastern Mosul are already returning to their homes, with over 29,000 having done so in recent weeks. The liberation has also enabled more than 23,000 children to return to school and continue their education.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Iraqi forces, supported by Britain and the Coalition, have made strong progress in the fight against Daesh. We're keeping up the momentum with operations to liberate western Mosul due to start shortly.

This will be a more complex fight in a densely populated urban environment. Britain will continue playing its part providing precision strikes, vital intelligence, and training Iraqi forces to deal with explosive devices planted by Daesh.

Sir Michael also announced that Britain will send a UK military officer to help lead NATO's newly established training mission in Iraq, from July this year. The new NATO training and capacity building team will help the Iraqis in dealing with the threats they face, including to counter Daesh improvised explosive devices. The UK has already contributed £1 million to help establish NATO's presence in Baghdad, which will provide expert advice on defence issues to the Iraqi Government.

[News story: Britain and Cyprus Step Up Defence Co-Operation](#)

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and Cypriot Defence Minister Christoforos Fokaides signed a Defence Co-operation Programme in the capital

Nicosia today, agreeing to closer working.

Building on the agreement signed last year, the Ministers agreed that the key regional partners would now work closely across Special Forces, counter terrorism, Crisis Response, intelligence, Air Defence, hybrid warfare and cyber.

Improved Maritime Search and Rescue co-operation will be a particular focus, and during his visit Sir Michael offered Cyprus the chance to display alongside the international community at Royal International Air Tattoo 2017 and reviewed opportunities for naval personnel exchanges.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Britain is stepping up its global role and Cyprus is a key partner in promoting European security and stability.

We have now committed to strengthen our defence partnership with greater co-operation in areas such as counter terrorism, maritime security, and crisis response.

The Defence Secretary also announced the continuing commitment to train senior Cypriot Officers at the Royal College of Defence Studies together with other training being opened up on the Advanced Command and Staff Course.

While in Cyprus, Sir Michael visited the Zenon Joint Rescue Coordination Centre, on the island's south coast. Extending the Republic of Cyprus' crisis response capability, the centre incorporates modern maritime surveillance and warning systems and is central to Cyprus's efforts to tackle illegal human trafficking.

Sir Michael's visit comes at an important time for Cyprus, following the UN-facilitated talks held in Geneva in January, and as negotiations continue towards a solution to the long-standing Cyprus issue. The Defence Secretary confirmed that as a Guarantor Power, the UK will do whatever necessary to secure a settlement and our priority is for both sides to find an agreement allowing each community to feel secure.



Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon met UK Armed Forces personnel at RAF Akrotiri during the visit. Crown Copyright.

The Defence Secretary also took the opportunity to thank the Cypriot Minister for their support to Op Shader, with British aircraft operating from RAF Akrotiri, and Cyprus' own contribution including to the foreign fighters part of the campaign. Sir Michael visited RAF Akrotiri, meeting with 903 Expeditionary Airwing later in the day.

Since Sir Michael's last visit in September last year, the RAF has attacked 330 further terrorist targets in and around Mosul, working in the closest possible cooperation with the brave Iraqi troops.