

The Royal Navy frigate HMS Richmond takes part in a successful maritime exercise in the Andaman Sea with HTMS Kraburi of the Royal Thai Navy

A truly global journey in support of the 'Indo-Pacific Tilt':

On 23rd of May 2021, the UK's Carrier Strike Group (CSG), led by HMS Queen Elizabeth on her maiden operational deployment departed Portsmouth Naval Base at the beginning of a truly global journey. HMS Queen Elizabeth is the largest and most powerful vessel ever constructed for the Royal Navy. Upon its return later in the year, the CSG will have sailed 26,000 nautical miles from the North Atlantic, to the Philippine sea and back, passing through the the Indo-Pacific region and engaging with more than 40 countries.

On 24th July, the British Embassy Bangkok welcomed HMS Richmond to Thailand. One of HMS Queen Elizabeth's escort ships in the CSG, HMS Richmond took part of the UK Carrier Strike Group (CSG), in a Passing Exercise (PASSEX) with HTMS Kraburi of the Royal Thai Navy in the Andaman Sea. The visit to Thailand is evidence of the UK's so called 'Indo-Pacific tilt' aimed at establishing a stronger presence and a deeper engagement with countries within the region.

Particularly for Thailand, our trade and investment relations is stronger than ever with the signing of a new joint trade dialogue – The Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) earlier in March. HMS Richmond's visit demonstrates our commitment to ensuring a free and open Asia Pacific which is a foundation of closer bilateral trade between our two maritime trading nations.

The embodiment of maritime technological excellence:

HMS Richmond embodies the unique display of the state-of-the-art systems and operational capabilities of the British Defence Industry's technologies, and showcase the frigate's power, versatility, and capability to operate anywhere in the world.

A resemblance of the UK's long and successful naval history can be observed throughout each component aboard HMS Richmond. For example, its state-of-the-art anti-submarine equipment (VDS Sonar 2087 commonly known as Captas-4) and the complete suite of Naval Communication Systems by Thales. The Thales Sonar 2087 provides a unique combination of active and low frequency passive sonar and gives the Royal Navy a unique advantage in detecting underwater threats at distance while maintaining stealth capabilities. Combined with the AW159 FLASH dipping sonar and Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM) this provides a powerful system for the detection classification, location, tracking and attack of hostile submarines, and missile defence against air and sea borne threats.

The INTeACT Combat Management System on board is provided by BAE Systems to support warship crews with all the information they need to track, analyse and respond to threats in combat, as well as the ability to co-ordinate resources in other operations such as intelligence gathering and humanitarian assistance, both independently or as part of multinational coalitions. In addition, its BAE Systems Artisan 3D Surveillance Radar is capable of detecting objects as small as a tennis ball travelling at three times the speed of sound more than 25km away. Artisan can monitor more than 900 objects simultaneously from 200 to 200,000 metres and cut through radio interference equal to 10,000 mobile phone signals.

HMS Richmond's hybrid propulsion system is powered by two Rolls-Royce Spey SM1C marine gas turbines and four MTU 12V 4000 M53 diesel generators in a CODAG (Combined Diesel Electric & Gas) propulsion arrangement. The on-board Wildcat Maritime Attack helicopter is the latest generation of multi-role helicopters powered by two LHTEC CTS800 turboshaft engines

On board the ship, The AW-159 Wildcat Helicopter is the latest-generation multi-mission, high-end war-fighting helicopter, delivering unparalleled tactical capability in a compact and robust air vehicle, manufactured by Leonardo UK. The helicopter has been designed from concept as a multi-role naval helicopter with excellent Ship-to-Air Interface characteristics and compact dimensions for small deck operations.

A longstanding history of Naval Engineering Experience in Thailand:

For at least of half a century, British naval technologies has been at the forefront of supporting the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) fleets.

"Thales' partnership with the Royal Thai Armed Forces dates back over 50 years, and today we are proud to say that our systems and solutions equip 80% of the Royal Thai Navy's fleet. Just two years ago, we successfully completed a full modernisation of the Bang Rachan minehunter vessels, helping enhance and extend the lifespan of their operational capabilities with solutions originating from Thales UK. The breadth of our technologies showcased onboard the HMS Richmond is a strong testament of Thales' leading prowess in the naval domain, and I am optimistic that these solutions can similarly be implemented with great success onboard the RTN's fleet." said Massimo Marini, Country Director, Thales in Thailand.

Rolls-Royce has a growing presence in Thailand and across the defence industry. Looking to the future, Rolls-Royce in Thailand will continue to work closely with the Royal Thai Armed Forces, supply chain vendors and the local industries and communities to provide the power to protect. Through the development of innovative technologies and continuous provision of support for its customers' fleets, Rolls-Royce continues to deliver the cleanest, safest and most competitive solutions for the planet's vital power needs.

BAE Systems UK is proud to support the strong defence relationship and cooperation that exists between the UK and Thailand. This is shown by the Royal Thai Navy operating two BAE Systems designed 90m Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), based on the River Class OPVs currently operated by the Royal

Thai Navy. The construction of the Royal Thai Navy OPVs in Thailand by The Bangkok Dock Company has made a major contribution to the growth of local naval engineering skills and capabilities, and in turn strengthened the Thai defence industry and wider Thai economy.

The longstanding history of British Naval Engineering is clearly going strong as we welcome the proximity of the Carrier Strike Group to Thailand as a symbol of our mutual commitment to a free and open Asia Pacific with all the benefits that affords to share regional and global security and prosperity.

Colonel Tony Stern, Defence Attaché, British Embassy Bangkok, said,

The recent successful exercise of HMS Richmond and HTMS Kraburi highlights the importance and strength of the UK's long-standing defence and security relationship with Thailand. The Carrier Strike Group showcases the UK Defence Industry's world-class capabilities, and the UK will continue to support closer and stronger collaboration with Thailand and other ASEAN nations on defence and security matters.

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- Maintaining relationships with overseas governments to promote British defence and security products.
- Working with MOD and industry to ensure defence and security products have export potential and contribute towards the UK's prosperity agenda.