

Defence Secretary National Flagship Engagement Day speech

Good morning, it's a real pleasure to be here today in Greenwich, the epicentre of Britain's maritime heritage.

From the Prime Minister's opening remarks and your surroundings you might just have detected some symbolism to the venue for our discussion today.

The rich history of this place reminds us that – as a proud island nation – Great Britain has always depended on great sailors and great ships, in turn dependent on great shipwrights and great shipyards.

The Cutty Sark, just a few hundred yards from here in the Painted Hall, is just one example, as one of the most innovative vessels of her age.

Built in Scotland, before sailing the world to facilitate global trade, then training future sailors and ultimately becoming an internationally recognised icon of British maritime history.

So, Greenwich is the perfect place from which to reflect not just on that heritage but on how important our shipbuilding fortunes still are to our nation's success.

After all, this is a sector that generates billions for our economy and spreads prosperity right across the nations of our United Kingdom.

It is an industry that directly provides for the livelihoods of some 44,000 people – and their families – from Appledore to the Clyde and so many more indirectly through the supply chain.

And it's a sector that is also a world leader in Design and Innovation, capable of creating and engineering masterpieces like the HMS Queen Elizabeth. The most powerful surface vessel we have ever built and now embarked on her maiden deployment. Not just protecting our national security, but promoting our values, interests, trade, and prosperity.

Today, the HMS Queen Elizabeth enters the South China Sea in another phase of her journey. As we strive for the Prime Minister's ambition for 'Global Britain' we need our maritime industries to deliver for all of Britain.

As Shipbuilding Tsar, I want our shipbuilders to be not just more productive, but to prove themselves more competitive, innovative, ambitious, and enterprising.

Which is why today I am calling on you, our nation's finest shipbuilders, to come forward – or perhaps I should say 'muster' – and to help us design and build a new National Flagship.

Our ambition is for something special, not just a cutting-edge ship, but a

truly national flagship.

- A floating embassy to promote the UK's diplomatic and trading interests in coastal capitals around the world: hosting high level negotiations, trade shows, summits and other diplomatic talks.
- A prestigious showcase for UK skills and expertise. Designed to incorporate leading technologies in power, propulsion and practice. Making the most of digital systems and autonomy to support its crew from the Royal Navy.
- The greenest ship of its kind, environmentally and ecologically advanced, maximising the use of sustainable fuels and materials.
- The source for a legacy of regional and national regeneration. Creating more apprenticeships and opening-up more opportunities for a new generation to develop highly skilled, exciting and varied careers in shipbuilding.

As such our new National Flagship will be the 'jewel in the crown' of our upcoming National Shipbuilding Strategy. Now, that may sound whimsical or an exaggeration, but I want to be clear – this is not just a flag ship but a flagship project to showcase to the country and the world just what British shipbuilding is capable of – innovative design, competitive build, quality service.

Underlining our intention to be the country of choice for specialist commercial vessels, yachts and naval vessels, and what we intend to do with this ship. And encouraging more nations to seek out that made-in-Britain stamp.

What I want this ship to be is at the vanguard of the 21st Century Shipping technology. British made. A British led design, built by British hands. It is our chance to inspire and to showcase to the world our skills and people, generating jobs and opportunities across our British shipyards.

There has been a lot of reporting around this ship. Not all of it accurate. So let me set out our basic aims. Subject to working through bids, competition and technology, I aim to commission the ship for between £200 and £250 million on a firm price.

The competition will run until the end of October. I hope to announce the winners in December. To begin construction in a British shipyard as early as next year and have a ship in the water by 2024 or 2025.

That's an ambitious timescale but this is an ambitious project – the chance to break the mould and break some records to get things done in the national interest.

I'm a great believer in the power of competition to deliver results. And I'm also confident that in the UK we have the talent to succeed in that competition.

I want this ship to be as green as possible, as beautiful as this hall itself and as inspiring as Nelson. I want the grandparents of the future, to boast to their grandchildren and say one day, "I helped built that ship!"

One of the joys of my job is visiting yards and factories and meeting the young men and women who work on the projects. I also meet the sailors of the Royal Navy. All of them are immensely proud of the role they play. The Prime Minister and I believe that at the very least, we owe it to them to invest in their futures. This project will be a national endeavour and if we do it right, it will pay for itself over and over again.

This vessel, will signal the UK's commitment, as an independent trading nation, to expanding and enhancing commerce with our key export markets around the world.

In its features, form and function, we expect its design to make waves. And we're challenging you to deliver it at a pace never seen before in the UK.

So I have established a National Flagship Taskforce, housed in the MOD, to oversee the programme and to make sure the vessel comes in on time and on budget.

And today we are setting out the project and design principles and will provide an outline of our requirements – then it's over to you to show us what you can do.

But I only have to look at our maritime heritage to know you will rise to the challenge.

In this hall devoted to the golden age of sail, we're sparking a new shipbuilding renaissance. Not just creating a vessel – just like the Cutty Sark – that will 'sail' the seven seas for decades to come. And in doing so to become another famous flagship and to once more pilot our nation towards the shores of future prosperity.

So, thank you for joining us today, I'm excited to discover what we can all achieve together.

I want you to build, design and compete in spirit of this British endeavour in something that I know we will all be proud of. One day, hopefully, I will stand on the deck of this ship, and be able boast to ministers and manufacturers, we did it. We did it this century.

UK and Kenya sign new Defence Cooperation Agreement to tackle shared threat from Al-Shabaab

The UK is stepping up its counter-terrorism and military support to Kenya as the two countries signed a new five-year Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA).

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace and Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Defence Dr Monica Juma signed the accord during her visit to London yesterday.

The agreement will enable the two countries to enhance coordination in their joint efforts to improve regional security in East Africa, including the fight against Islamist terrorist group Al-Shabaab.

The UK and Kenya already regularly work together to counter the threat from Al-Shabaab, not only through training as strengthened in the DCA, but also by sharing information and identifying new ways to target the group financially with sanctions, and starve them of new recruits by addressing the root causes of violent extremism.

Building on the existing agreement, the new DCA will provide a basis for the exchange of military personnel for defence activity, allowing for enhanced training opportunities and increased collaboration in peace support work.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

It was great to meet Dr Monica Juma again today. We held very fruitful discussions and agreed a range of measures to keep both of our countries safer.

Kenya has long been our defence partner of choice in East Africa and, in a more uncertain world, we will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder as we tackle the threats of tomorrow.

The two defence secretaries discussed a range of additional enhanced UK counter-terrorism support to Kenya, including increasing protection for tourists on the coast, where many of the 180,000 British tourists who visit Kenya every year travel to.

They also discussed expanding UK programmes to prevent extremism in coastal and other key areas – including the appointment of a dedicated Maritime Security officer – providing technical support to Kenya's first terrorism court, enhancing collaboration to counter terrorist financing and increasing training for Kenyan forces to tackle Al Shabaab in the country's north-east.

Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Defence, Dr Monica Juma said:

Today, the Rt Hon Ben Wallace and I reaffirmed our commitment to continue deepening the defence cooperation between our two nations.

The framework underpinning this strategic relationship is the Defence Cooperation Agreement which has become an invaluable tool for enhancing the competencies of our defence forces. Overall, our cooperation continues to significantly improve the ability of our forces to operate effectively in high-threat environments.

The recently published Integrated Review and Defence Command Paper outlined that in an age of global and systemic competition, our Armed Forces will be persistently globally engaged with partners around the world to tackle emerging threats at their source. Over £24 billion of extra defence spending was also announced over the next four years, giving the UK's Armed Forces the resources to rise to this challenge.

British troops help to train over 1,100 Kenyan soldiers every year before they deploy to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to fight Al-Shabaab.

The British Army and Kenya Defence Force (KDF) conduct around five joint training exercises every year, involving around 750 Kenyan and 5,000 British troops.

The signing of the DCA comes six months after the two defence secretaries met in Nairobi, agreeing a refreshed security compact to deepen cooperation in tackling Al-Shabaab and other shared threats such as cybercrime and human trafficking.

GFSL team install life saving medical equipment at HMP Bristol

Press release

This month, The GFSL Team at HMP Bristol proudly fitted a defibrillator machine to an external prison wall.



Bristol Prison is a men's prison in the Horfield area of Bristol.

The defibrillator is thought to be the first of its kind located within a prison wall. GFSL hopes that this will inspire other installations in similar prison sites. Funded by local shopkeepers, the cost of this defibrillator cost approximately £2,000.

Defibrillators are normally located in workplaces and public spaces like airports, shopping centres, community centres, and train stations. These defibrillators are known as public access defibrillators (PADs) as anyone can use them.

Local Bristol business owners and the community at large are aware of the defibrillator's location, so if anyone is in difficulty, they can follow the emergency procedure, which is:

- Call 999, ask for emergency medical services who provide a special code
- This allows the defibrillator door to open
- The services then provide instant, over the phone instructions
- In order for the patient to have the best chance of surviving an out of hospital cardiac arrest, CPR and early defibrillation must be provided within the first 3-4 minutes of the cardiac arrest, followed by advanced life support within the first 8 minutes of the arrest.

GFSL Manager Dean Conisbee commented:

This was a team effort – we are delighted to be able to install a life saving piece of equipment into the local community infrastructure.

About Defibrillators

In the UK there are over 30,000 out-of-hospital cardiac arrests (OHCA) a year where emergency medical services attempt to resuscitate the victim. However, the survival rate is low – just 1 in 10 people in the UK survive an OHCA. The more awareness surrounding PDAs and an increase in locations will help increase the rate of survival.

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PM to welcome President Kenyatta for talks on boosting UK-Kenya partnership: 28 July 2021

- Prime Minister to meet President Kenyatta at Chequers today for talks on strengthening the UK-Kenya relationship
- UK will offer 817,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses to Kenya as part of global commitment to address the pandemic
- UK and Kenya will co-host the Global Education Summit in London on Thursday

The Prime Minister will welcome Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta to Chequers this afternoon, ahead of the two leaders hosting the Global Education Summit in London tomorrow.

They are expected to plant a tree at the Prime Minister's official country residence, to mark our ambition to grow the long-standing partnership between the UK and Kenya and tackle climate change together ahead of COP26. The Prime Minister and President will hold talks on issues including trade, defence, development, and the global fight against Covid-19.

The UK will offer 817,000 vaccine doses to Kenya to support efforts to combat the pandemic, with the first 400,000 doses going this week. This is part of a delivery of 9 million Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines to COVAX and directly to individual countries due to be announced by the Foreign Secretary today, the first tranche of the UK's commitment to share 100 million vaccine doses internationally by next June.

The UK and Kenya are also working together to boost investment and business links between our two countries. The trading relationship is already worth around £1.4 billion a year, with 40 per cent of all tea consumed in the UK coming from Kenya.

President Kenyatta launched the Nairobi International Finance Centre at an event at Mansion House in conjunction with the City of London yesterday [Tuesday], and UK insurance firm Prudential announced they would be the first company to sign up to the Centre and establish their Africa HQ in Kenya.

There were a number of major new investments announced in clean tech, reflecting the UK and Kenya's commitment to cooperate on accelerating the shift to renewable energy and sustainable infrastructure.

Among others, a new £58 million fund, anchored by £35 million of UK Government investment, was launched to finance the construction of 10,000 green affordable homes in Kenya, and a £3.3 million investment was announced

from UK-backed InfraCo Africa to finance the expansion of off-grid solar energy in Western Kenya.

Speaking ahead of today's meeting, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UK and Kenya share a long and rich history, but this is a relationship that is focused on the future.

As friends and allies, we are sharing UK vaccine doses to support Kenya's fight against the pandemic. From boosting economic growth to addressing climate change and getting girls into school, the UK and Kenya are working hand-in-hand to deliver a more secure and prosperous world.

I look forward to welcoming President Kenyatta today to drive that agenda forward, and to joining forces tomorrow to raise vital funds at the Global Education Summit in London.

The UK and Kenya will co-host the Global Education Summit on Thursday to raise \$5 billion over the next five years for the work of the Global Partnership for Education to get 175 million vulnerable children into learning. World leaders, businesses, charities, education experts and youth ambassadors are expected to attend the event in London.

[UK Government to acquire Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited](#)



The Ministry of Defence (MOD) has today launched an offer to acquire Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited (SFIL), allowing HM Government to refinance the company and secure the supply of components for the MOD's critical existing and future UK defence programmes.

The MOD also intends to invest up to £400 million for defence critical plant, equipment and infrastructure into SFIL over the next 10 years to support

defence outputs. The acquisition has been assessed as the best value for money for the taxpayer due to the unique capabilities and circumstances. The immediate cost of the acquisition is £2.56 million for the entire share capital of the company plus debt assumed.

SFIL is the only available manufacturer with the skills and capability to produce large scale high-integrity castings and forgings from specialist steels in an integrated facility to the highest standards required for these programmes. Furthermore, SFIL's ownership will not prevent other UK based manufacturers bidding for MOD contracts, which will continue to be run in an open and fair competition.

The MOD has already started working closely with the company to implement best practice governance that will ensure appropriate financial oversight to secure the company's future success, with the aim eventually to return the business to the private sector.

Following the announcement on 28 July that Ministry of Defence had launched an offer to acquire Sheffield Forgemasters International Limited, the acquisition was successfully completed on 19 August. This secures the supply of components for the MOD's critical existing and future UK defence programmes.

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Updated to confirm that acquisition has now been completed

2. 28 July 2021

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