

PM's record defence pledge to protect Scottish security and jobs

- Boost to the defence budget will ensure the UK and allies can defend against traditional and emerging threats while protecting the world's most vulnerable people
- Commitment includes an ambition to expand the shipbuilding programme which is already creating thousands of jobs on the Clyde
- PM to announce a new UK 'Space Command', with the first rocket launched from Scotland by 2022

Scotland and the whole of the UK will be better protected and able to play a more active role defending our allies and values following the landmark defence investment announced by the Prime Minister today [Thursday].

A £16.5 billion boost to the defence budget over the next four years will ensure the UK remains the second highest defence spender in NATO and will allow us to invest in the cutting-edge, next-generation technology that will demonstrate to our allies that they can always count on the UK.

The Prime Minister said:

Next year will be a year of British leadership, when we preside over the G7, host COP26 in Glasgow and celebrate the 75th anniversary of the of the first United Nations General Assembly.

Britain must be true to our history and stand alongside our allies, sharing the burdens and bringing our expertise to bear on the world's toughest problems.

The returns of this investment will go far beyond our Armed Forces, creating thousands of jobs, reinforcing the Union and levelling up our country.

The spending commitment will finance the UK's order of 8 Type 26 and 5 Type 31 frigates, which are currently being constructed on the Clyde, creating thousands of jobs. The Prime Minister will also set out his commitment to the next generation of warship – the Type 32 – which would also be built in the UK.

The record contribution will also allow the Ministry of Defence to invest in research to create the technology of tomorrow – for conflicts on land and sea, and in the air, space and cyberspace.

As we have seen in the past, and as we're currently seeing in areas such as autonomous vehicles and aviation, these developments will also have civilian applications.

In his speech the Prime Minister will announce a new 'Space Command', capable of launching our first rocket from Scotland in 2022.

Scotland has always played a critical role in the UK's defence. That is thanks to its important geographical position which makes it an ideal home for half of the UK's typhoon force and the Royal Navy's entire submarine service, and to its people, who have always answered the call of duty to serve their country. Around 10,000 regular personnel and 4,000 reservists call Scotland home and this number is growing.

The projects announced by the Prime Minister today will therefore directly benefit the people of Scotland, bringing security and economic benefits for decades to come.

Expanded study tests immune response of care home staff and residents

The Vivaldi 2 study will more than triple in size to provide a detailed picture of coronavirus infection in care homes in England. These findings will help improve understanding of these vulnerable groups' immune response to COVID-19 and help inform future treatments for the virus.

As part of the major research study led by University College London (UCL), 14,000 care home residents and staff will be tested quarterly for their immune response to COVID-19. The number of care homes taking part will increase from 100 to 340, testing approximately 4,500 residents and 9,500 staff.

Researchers will analyse how antibody and cellular immunity to the virus differs among different groups and help shape the planning and national public health response to COVID-19 as well as wider social-care policy.

This study will help complement the work the department of health and social care (DHSC) is doing to support the care sector. This includes this week's launch of visitation trials in a number of care homes with a roll out planned across care homes in December. Protection of staff and residents has been a priority throughout the pandemic with 120,000 daily tests ringfenced, free personal protective equipment (PPE) and more than £1.1 billion worth of support through the Infection Control Fund.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

Expanding this brilliant study, with the support of UCL, is another step towards improving our understanding of the virus. Testing people's antibody reaction to Covid-19 is crucial in helping us to

control the spread of the virus, particularly amongst people who are vulnerable.

The more we know about this virus and are able to control it, the safer it will be for people in care homes.

The expansion will:

- provide a larger and more nationally representative sample of care home residents and staff, allowing the Vivaldi 2 study team to provide more robust estimates across the population
- address important immunity research questions such as whether individuals can be infected twice, how quickly neutralising antibodies wane and whether the immune response in the elderly is the same in younger generations
- link immunity data with epidemiological data to better understand the links between infection, demography and clinical outcome on the elderly and the impact of care-home characteristics on the spread of the virus in the sector
- offer an opportunity to work with a wider range of small care home chains and independent providers to ensure results are representative of all care homes in England

The Vivaldi 2 study uses trained phlebotomists to draw blood from care home residents and staff which is then used to test for the presence of antibodies for COVID-19. This data is cross-referenced with DHSC-delivered swab testing in care homes to analyse prevalence of the virus over time.

Vivaldi 2 is led by University College London (UCL) and funded by DHSC. It began in June 2020 and is predicted to last to April 2022. The exact end date will be determined by how prevalent COVID-19 is in the tested care homes.

Dr Laura Shallcross of UCL Institute of Health Informatics said:

Expanding the Vivaldi study will tell us how many people living and working in care homes have been infected with COVID-19, and whether being infected once protects against future infections. This study will help us protect the most vulnerable members of society from this devastating infection.

Testing in these new homes is being phased in through November.

Understanding both the antibody immunity and cellular immunity responses as part of the expansion of the original Vivaldi study will provide crucial data to help inform future treatments for COVID-19, including vaccine development.

PM to announce largest military investment in 30 years

- Multi-year settlement will allow MoD to invest in next-generation military capability, defending our people from new and evolving threats and protecting the world's most vulnerable while creating 10,000 jobs annually across the UK
- Defence settlement underpins wider drive to use our foreign policy to defend free and open societies
- Major announcements mark the first conclusions from the Integrated Review of the UK's foreign, defence, development and security policy

The biggest programme of investment in British defence since the end of the Cold War will be announced today [Thursday] by the Prime Minister.

In a speech to the House of Commons he will set out a £16.5 billion increase above the manifesto commitment over four years that will protect our citizens, help us build back better from coronavirus by creating thousands of new jobs and demonstrate to our allies they can always count on the UK.

Our defence forces are operating in a rapidly changing world. This spending increase recognises the need for them to undertake a generational modernisation programme in order to defend the UK, our allies and the world's most vulnerable people.

Since the Cold War the threat from our adversaries has been evolving. Our traditional defence and deterrence capabilities remain vital, and our Armed Forces work every day to prevent terror reaching the UK's shores. But our enemies are also operating in increasingly sophisticated ways, including in cyberspace, to further their own interests.

Rather than being confined to some distant battlefield, those that seek to do harm to our people can reach them through the mobile phones in their pockets or the computers in their homes. To protect our citizens, UK Defence therefore needs to operate at all times with leading, cutting-edge technology.

Our Armed Forces are also working in a broader range of areas than ever before to protect the most vulnerable people in the UK and around the world. Over the course of the coronavirus pandemic in the UK over 20,000 personnel have been made available to deliver PPE, run testing sites and ensure those in the most remote areas can receive the medical care they need.

Defence has also been on the front line responding to every major international humanitarian disaster of the last decade. In the last year alone HMS Enterprise has come to the aid of Lebanon following the explosion in the Port of Beirut, RFA Argus and Army personnel have delivered disaster relief to Central American countries ravaged by Hurricane Eta, and the RAF has transported vital medical supplies to communities struggling against

coronavirus in West Africa and the UK's Overseas Territories.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said:

I have taken this decision in the teeth of the pandemic because the defence of the realm must come first.

The international situation is more perilous and more intensely competitive than at any time since the Cold War and Britain must be true to our history and stand alongside our allies. To achieve this we need to upgrade our capabilities across the board.

This is our chance to end the era of retreat, transform our Armed Forces, bolster our global influence, unite and level up our country, pioneer new technology and defend our people and way of life.

The £16.5 billion extra in the Ministry of Defence's budget over the next four years is the amount over and above the manifesto commitment. The Government has already pledged to increase defence spending by 0.5% above inflation for every year of this parliament. On existing forecasts, this is an overall cash increase of £24.1 billion over four years compared to last year's budget.

It will also cement the UK's position as the largest defence spender in Europe and the second largest in NATO.

The commitment will allow the Government to invest in cutting-edge technology, positioning the UK as a global leader in domains such as cyber and space and addressing weaknesses in our defence arsenal that cannot be allowed to continue. To support these advancements the Prime Minister will also announce a new agency dedicated to Artificial Intelligence, the creation of a National Cyber Force to protect our people from harm and a new 'Space Command', capable of launching our first rocket in 2022.

This will be underpinned by a record investment of at least £1.5 billion extra and £5.8 billion total on military research and development and a commitment to invest further in the Future Combat Air System. This reverses the systematic decline in this crucial area in the last thirty years, creating new advances which surmount the old limits of logistics and go beyond military use with a vast number of civilian applications such as autonomous vehicles and aviation.

These projects are expected to create up to 10,000 thousand jobs annually across the UK. These will reflect the expertise and ingenuity of British people both inside and outside our Armed Forces, harnessing the UK's skills in construction and science and reinvigorating those industries in the coming decades.

The Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, said:

This is excellent news for Defence, and provides us with the financial certainty we need to modernise, plan for the future and adapt to the threats we face. It demonstrates the Prime Minister's recognition of how important Defence is to our resilience and to the reputation of the United Kingdom.

This settlement secures UK jobs and livelihoods, allows us to invest in our fantastic shipyards and aerospace industry, spreading prosperity to every corner of the UK.

Next year represents a huge opportunity for this country, and Defence will be at the forefront of creating the jobs and business opportunities that will help us build back from the pandemic.

Over the next few months I will set out in more detail our ambitious agenda for Defence.

Today's announcements mark the first outcomes from the Integrated Review of the UK's foreign, defence, development and security policy. The full conclusions of the Integrated Review will be announced in the new year.

[Joint Statement on Hong Kong – November 2020](#)

Press release

Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and the United States Secretary of State issue a joint statement on the situation in Hong Kong.



We the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and the United States Secretary of State, reiterate our serious concern regarding China's imposition of new rules to

disqualify elected legislators in Hong Kong. Following the imposition of the National Security Law and postponement of September's Legislative Council elections, this decision further undermines Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms.

China's action is a clear breach of its international obligations under the legally binding, UN-registered Sino-British Joint Declaration. It breaches both China's commitment that Hong Kong will enjoy a 'high degree of autonomy', and the right to freedom of speech.

The disqualification rules appear part of a concerted campaign to silence all critical voices following the postponement of September's Legislative Council elections, the imposition of charges against a number of elected legislators, and actions to undermine the freedom of Hong Kong's vibrant media.

We call on China to stop undermining the rights of the people of Hong Kong to elect their representatives in keeping with the Joint Declaration and Basic Law. For the sake of Hong Kong's stability and prosperity, it is essential that China and the Hong Kong authorities respect the channels for the people of Hong Kong to express their legitimate concerns and opinions.

As a leading member of the international community, we expect China to live up to its international commitments and its duty to the people of Hong Kong. We urge the Chinese central authorities to reconsider their actions against Hong Kong's elected legislature and immediately reinstate the Legislative Council members.

Published 18 November 2020

[Putting the needs and security of Israelis and Palestinians first](#)

Thank you very much, Madam President, and thank you to Special Coordinator Mladenov for his briefing.

Madam President, as others have done, I would like to start by reflecting on the tragic passing of Saeb Erekat. I echo the words of my Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary in offering our condolences to the family of Saeb Erekat, to President Abbas, and to the Palestinian people. Dr Erekat dedicated his life to dialogue, to Palestinian rights, and to advancing the cause of peace.

He will be sorely missed.

It is with Dr Erekat's legacy in mind that we must renew our commitment to acting through dialogue, to building trust and cooperation, and to avoiding the unilateral and inflammatory steps that undermine the cause of peace.

Madam President, as we made clear repeatedly in this Council, the United Kingdom opposed annexation and welcomed its suspension. Other unilateral action which jeopardises the physical viability of a future Palestinian state is also unacceptable. The United Kingdom condemns the Government of Israel's publication of tenders for construction in the East Jerusalem settlement of Givat Hamatos, an extremely sensitive area of the West Bank. Settlements are illegal under international law, and remain an obstacle to peace and a threat to the two-state solution.

The United Kingdom also expresses our serious concern following the demolition of Humsa Al-Baqai'a by the Israeli Authorities on 3 November. This act caused the displacement of vulnerable Palestinians, including 41 children, and it caused unnecessary suffering. 2020 has seen the highest levels of demolitions of Palestinian homes and structures since 2016. The United Kingdom calls on the Government of Israel to cease this policy, and provide Palestinians with a clear, transparent route to construction in Area C of the West Bank. In all but the most exceptional of circumstances, Madam President, demolitions are a violation of International Humanitarian Law.

Madam President, the United Kingdom remains deeply concerned by the situation in Gaza, particularly at this time of global pandemic. We continue to urge the parties to prioritise progress towards reaching a durable solution for Gaza and to take the necessary practical steps to ensure Gaza's reconstruction and economic recovery. We encourage actors to put forward long-term, sustainable proposals to resolve the threat posed to Israel's security by Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad and other militants in Gaza. We call upon Hamas and other terrorist groups to permanently end their incitement and rocket fire against Israel.

We note the Commissioner General's urgent call for additional funding for UNRWA this month, without which schools will close from the beginning of December. We call in particular on states which have cut their funding significantly in recent years to support UNRWA now. And I note that this year the United Kingdom has given over \$65 million, and that is commensurate with previous years as well. We are sympathetic to those who argue that UNRWA must do more to reach a secure and sustainable financial footing; but this cannot be achieved by 1 December, and money is needed by then to avoid unnecessarily adding to the refugees' suffering.

This week, Madam President, we have seen the historic first Ministerial visit of the Kingdom of Bahrain to Israel. Normalisation agreements show that the Arab world and Israel can pursue a positive path, away from hostility, and towards a more peaceful, prosperous region.

With dialogue in mind, my government therefore welcomes reports that the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel will return to cooperation

and abide by signed agreements. Full cooperation, across financial, security and health matters, puts the needs and security of Israelis and Palestinians first. This is an example of the dialogue and compromise that we have called for, and that will be required to make meaningful progress towards a two-state solution. Both parties should now seize this positive momentum, and show commitment to their bilateral agreements through their actions on the ground.

73 years ago this month, the United Nations decided on the partition of Palestine. Piece by painful piece, over many years, progress was made towards an agreed partition – a two-state solution. As the region takes strides towards dialogue, it is time, too, for the parties to the Israel-Palestine conflict to stop dismantling peace, and start building it again.

Thank you, Madam President.