

News story: Defence Secretary marks major step forward for UK's nuclear submarine capability

In a move that signals the UK's commitment to a continuous-at-sea deterrent, the Submarine Delivery Agency (SDA) was today officially launched.

The announcement comes after an extra £800 million was secured by the Ministry of Defence – £600 million of which will ensure the UK is protected by the new Dreadnought submarine fleet into the 2030s and beyond.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our nuclear deterrent is our ultimate defence from the most extreme threats while our attack submarines are busier than ever providing unprecedented levels of protection across the world.

A Royal Navy submarine is on patrol 24 hours a day, every day of the year, protecting our way of life. These advanced and complex vessels are more important than ever as the world becomes an increasingly dangerous place and establishing this new Agency sends a clear signal of our commitment to continue deterring conflict and protecting the nation.

The stand-up of the SDA marks the delivery of a milestone set out in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review that strengthens arrangements to support the UK's submarine capability.

The Executive Agency will lead on the procurement, in-service support and decommissioning of all UK nuclear submarines.

The SDA will procure and project manage the construction of future Royal Navy submarines, and support those in-service, working with Navy Command and the newly established Defence Nuclear Organisation.

The vision of the SDA is to lead a high-performing industrial enterprise to deliver and support the UK's submarine capability safely, securely and more effectively and cost efficiently.

Headed by Chief Executive Officer Ian Booth – who has a wealth of experience in delivering complex private and public sector procurement programmes – the SDA employs around 1,300 people and already has a talented and extremely knowledgeable workforce, including some of the nation's most experienced nuclear experts.

The Agency will have the authority and freedom to recruit and retain the best people to manage the Submarine Enterprise. The majority of SDA staff will be

based in Bristol, with other colleagues located at sites such as Barrow, Derby, Devonport, Rosyth and Faslane.

Chief Executive Officer of the Submarine Delivery Agency, Ian Booth said:

The SDA is to lead a high-performing industrial enterprise that is committed to strengthening the safety, availability, reliability and security of UK submarines, including our Continuous At Sea Deterrent. The Agency will draw on best practice from both the public and private sectors with a focus on cost effective and timely delivery to achieve the best possible outcomes for Defence.

The SDA has learnt from other successful programmes of a similar scale and complexity such as the 2012 Olympics and Crossrail. It will maintain vital links with industry and public sector partners to preserve the UK's technology advantage and skills-base and to ensure submarine manufacturing and maintenance capability is sufficient to support the UK's submarine requirements.

A key facet of the SDA is to manage the Dreadnought and Astute nuclear submarine programmes to time and budget, alongside providing day-to-day support to the in-service fleet of Trafalgar, Astute and Vanguard Class submarines. As a responsible nuclear operator, the organisation will also manage the decommissioning and disposal of submarines in a safe and environmentally sound way.

[News story: Defence Secretary announces £80m Guardian to protect the skies](#)

Known as Project Guardian, the new Air Command and Control System will support the continued early detection and rapid response to potential hostile or suspect aircraft that pose a threat to UK sovereignty, be that terrorists or state-based actors.

This project will see the current systems at RAF bases in the UK and Falkland Islands replaced with the new technology. It will allow the RAF to exercise command and control of UK and NATO fighters to intercept aggressive or suspect aircraft that are a threat. The RAF routinely intercept, identify and escort aircraft that transit international airspace within the UK's area of interest and continue to be on call 365 days a year.

Since 2013 RAF jets have launched 68 times to intercept or monitor suspect

aircraft in the skies around Britain – half of these in response to Russian planes.

IBM Services in the UK is leading the way to develop and install the replacement system, with work being carried out by a dedicated team of specialists at IBM locations across the country.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

With hostile regimes such as President Putin's Kremlin ripping up the international rulebook and terrorists still targeting our way of life, this cutting-edge technology gives our RAF the upper hand in the face of rapidly changing and intensifying global threats.

This investment will play a vital role in making sure our fighter pilots are primed and ready to keep Britain safe and to counter aggression from those who seek to cause us harm.

The Air Command and Control System is the computer system that takes in data to generate the Recognised Air Picture – a dynamic, real time depiction of aircraft in the airspace the UK control or patrol, with each being identified as friendly or hostile. The upgrades will continue improving the rapid exchange of real time command and control information and speed and accuracy of decision making.

The announcement comes as the RAF celebrates 100 years since its formation and demonstrates how the service is continuously looking at ways to design and innovate to meet the full spectrum of threats that the UK is currently facing.

The contract, which IBM UK won in competition, is for approximately £60 million with costed options that the MOD can exercise which would take the total value towards £80 million. It represents a continuation of IBM UK supplying the equipment to UK armed forces and includes five years of support services following the installations.

Director Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance, Dr Simon Dakin, of the MOD's procurement organisation, Defence Equipment and Support, said:

Guardian will provide a new Air Command and Control system connecting the UK's defence network of radars and radio and delivering several new capabilities to improve communication and interoperability between UK, NATO and coalition aircraft, vital to the protection of the UK's skies.

Group Captain Steven Blockley, director of the RAF's Director, National Air Defence and Space Operations, said:

The new system provides a quantum leap in technology and information exchange for the personnel charged with the Defence of the Homeland and will ensure that future homeland operations are conducted with equipment befitting the RAF as it reaches its 100th year. The equipment will ensure that new digital technologies, along with new requirements for future capabilities, will also allow us to seamlessly exchange data and threat information across the new RAF platforms, such as the P-8 maritime patrol aircraft and F-35 Lightning II, as well as continue to integrate with our NATO colleagues to ensure the UK National mission to protect our skies and the NATO Air Policing task are met fully.

[News story: Europe's largest military exercise gets under way in UK](#)

More than 11,600 military personnel from 17 nations will take part in Exercise Joint Warrior for two weeks this spring in one of the largest exercises of its kind in Europe, operating out of Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Clyde, Scotland.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Joint Warrior prepares our troops in the best way to meet the intensifying threats our country faces by providing a major opportunity to exercise with our allies.

Our Armed Forces are the face of global Britain, and training side by side with troops from 16 other nations means we are stronger and more capable when it comes to keeping our countries safe and protecting our way of life.

The bi-annual exercise is running from the 21st April to 4th May, and incorporates all three UK services as well as forces from 16 other nations including Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the US.

Linked to the NATO exercise programme and open to Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) Partner Nations, Joint Warrior also hosts non-NATO partners such as Australia, Finland and Sweden. This year the training scenarios involve multiple sovereign nations disputing resources and territories; counter-terrorism and anti-smuggling activity; information warfare; and evacuation operations.

The exercise will provide NATO allies and partner nations the opportunity to train together across air, land, sea and cyber domains, practicing “high-end” war-fighting between near-peer adversaries.

Captain Joint Tactical Exercise Planning Staff, Captain Paul Pitcher RN, said:

This exercise gives the UK participants a chance to train with our allies and partners, honing our skills and developing our tactics. It is hugely important in making sure that we can fuse all elements of our capabilities, enhancing our ability to conduct joint operations now and in the future.

It will culminate on Salisbury Plain Training Area on the 3rd May in which JEF forces, including troops from the UK Parachute Regiment, the Danish Jutland Dragoon Regiment, the Lithuanian “Iron Wolf” Brigade and the Latvian Mechanised Infantry Brigade, will conduct urban combat operations with air support provided by Apaches, Chinooks, Wildcats and Tornados.

Press release: Royal Navy Ship HMS Albion to visit Indonesia 22-25 April 2018

The British Royal Navy ship HMS Albion will be docked at Tanjung Priok port in Jakarta for a three day visit, aimed to increase defence engagement with the Indonesian Armed Forces. During the visit, members of the ship crew will conduct bilateral talks with the Indonesian Navy, UK defence industry and visit a local orphanage.

British Ambassador Moazzam Malik, said:

We have a growing defence relationship with Indonesia that supports our joint security interests and promotes prosperity. The deployment of HMS Albion in Indonesia provides an opportunity to support our partners in delivering maritime security in the region. Like Indonesia, the UK has a strong maritime history. We share a naval trading heritage. We will both remain maritime nations. It is in both of our interests to enjoy secure, accessible and sustainable maritime domains.

Captain Tim Neild, HMS Albion’s Commanding Officer, said:

HMS Albion is a very capable warship, manned by a crew of highly trained and hugely professional sailors and Royal Marines and we are greatly looking forward to visiting Jakarta to help strengthen the bonds between the UK and Indonesia. The presence of the Royal Navy's flagship in Asia-Pacific demonstrates that the UK is ready to work with our friends and allies to promote peace, security and prosperity throughout this vital region.

Notes to Editors

1. HMS Albion is a Landing Platform Dock – a type of amphibious operations vessel with a small force of embarked Royal Marines.
2. HMS Albion will be visiting Jakarta at the same time as the French Navy ship FS LHD Dixmude and Frigate Surcouf
3. Media are invited to attend the welcome ceremony and tour of HMS Albion at Tanjung Priok port on Sunday, 22 April at 1100hrs (JICT 2, Dermaga 203 Kaluku)
4. Crew of HMS Albion will also be visiting Nuruz Zahroh orphanage for social activities on Sunday, 22 April at 1330hrs. Logistics for media will be provided.
5. For further information please contact Embassy's press officer Raras Tulandaru at raras.tulandaru@fco.gov.uk

News story: Defence Secretary launches £132m Scots sub-hunting aircraft home

The site will be the future home to the country's nine-strong, new P-8A Poseidon MPA fleet. The aircraft's key role will be to protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers, whilst it can also deploy missiles capable of destroying enemy submarines beneath the sea.

The aircraft will work alongside eight cutting-edge new Type 26 warfare frigates – which also have their roots firmly in Scotland, where they are being built at BAE Systems' yard in Govan. Later today the Defence Secretary will visit the shipyard to view the first completed unit of the new anti-submarine warship, HMS Glasgow, in the shipbuilding hall where it is being connected to the second unit and will be joined by others as the ship takes shape.

The MOD is investing £3 billion over the next decade in its Maritime Patrol Aircraft capability, and last year confirmed £3.7bn to start building the first three of eight Royal Navy Type 26 frigates on the Clyde as it continues to boost its capabilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

These submarine hunters will play a vital role in keeping the UK safe from the increasing threats and aggression we face in the skies, on the sea and below the waves.

This massive investment demonstrates the huge contribution Scotland makes to protecting Britain and how defence generates prosperity and opportunity.

Moray is benefitting from 200 local construction jobs during this building phase, with the number of personnel employed at RAF Lossiemouth growing by 470 to 2,200 people when this is complete.

The news comes at a time when the Defence Secretary has warned that Russian submarine activity has increased 'ten-fold' in the North Atlantic sea.

Together the aircraft and ships will protect the UK's submarine-deployed nuclear deterrent and its two new aircraft carriers. In addition to boosting the UK's surveillance capabilities, they are both designed to conduct anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and to conduct intelligence gathering.

The new Lossiemouth facility will be completed in 2020, to coincide with initial operating capability of the Poseidon aircraft being available in the UK. Built by Elgin-based Robertson Northern, it will comprise a tactical operations centre, an operational conversion unit, squadron accommodation, training and simulation facilities and a three-bay aircraft hangar.

At the peak of construction, the project will support 200 local jobs. When the fleet is fully operational, some 470 additional personnel will be based at RAF Lossiemouth, taking the total number of people employed there to 2,200. Further roles are also expected when the training and support services are established at the new facility.

In addition to that, the Type 26 frigate programme will sustain 1,700 BAE Systems jobs in Scotland, safeguarding a total of 4,000 jobs across the wider UK supply chain until 2035. The next generation highly capable and versatile multi-mission warship designed to support anti-submarine warfare, air defence and general purpose operations anywhere on the world.