

# News story: UK's global role reinforced in new International Defence Engagement Strategy

Launching an ambitious framework for the UK's defence engagement overseas, Sir Michael Fallon and Boris Johnson committed to increasing cooperation with partners across the globe to keep Britain safe.

For the first time, defence engagement was made a core defence task in the Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015. As a result, Britain is now stepping up its global commitments and leadership in international organisations, including NATO and the UN, as well as with bilateral partners.

Britain's defence policy is becoming more 'International by Design', ensuring that we make our alliances and partnerships central to all that we do.

Defence engagement helps build the robust relationships on which our influence, prosperity and security depend. It enables us to respond to threats and crises when they emerge and strengthens our position as the world's leading soft power.

Our commitment to international Defence Engagement includes:

- Establishing three new regional British Defence Staffs for defence engagement in Gulf, Asia Pacific and West Africa.
- New Defence Sections in Albania and Finland and new Attaché posts in Latvia, Lithuania, Georgia (for the South Caucasus), Qatar, Japan, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- New Defence Section for the Sahel, covering Senegal, The Gambia, Mali and Niger.
- Increased military exercises with NATO partners and allies including in Ukraine, Poland and Estonia.
- Leading development of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) with Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway.
- Exercising and training with partners in the Five Power Defence Arrangements such as Exercise Eastern Venture.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Our increased ambition for Defence Engagement abroad demonstrates the UK's global role.

Whether it's by increasing our military expertise in the Middle East, training Nigerian forces in maritime security, or RAF Typhoons exercising over South Korea, Britain is committed to working internationally to protect our people and interests.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The International Defence Engagement Strategy ensures we get the best value from our brilliant and brave Armed Forces and world-class Diplomatic Service, enabling them to deliver security and prosperity for the British people. This is about sending a clear signal of the UK's intent as a dynamic, agile, cutting-edge global power.

Ahead of the annual Munich Security Conference, which started today, the Foreign and Defence Secretaries reaffirmed the UK's commitment to European security. The Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan, is also attending the conference. As Britain leaves the European Union, the UK is stepping up its global role and leadership in European security.

This year Britain is:

- Leading NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF), a Brigade size force ready to respond to any threat.
- Leading NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) in Estonia, where 1000 British troops will deploy alongside other NATO Allies to deter threats.
- Deploying a company size force to Poland, as part of the US' EFP battle group.
- Sending Typhoons to police NATO skies over Bulgaria and Romania.

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## [News story: UK urges Coalition to maintain momentum against Daesh](#)

With Daesh losing in both Iraq and Syria, Ministers considered the Coalition campaign plan for 2017. This included plans for the operation to liberate Western Mosul, which the Defence Secretary reviewed with the Iraqi Prime Minister and Defence Minister during his visit to Iraq last weekend. With eastern Mosul recently liberated by Iraqi forces, operations to free the west of the city from Daesh's tyranny will start shortly.

The RAF has been in action, striking Daesh around the approaches to the city in recent weeks ahead of the launch of the operation, including sinking a Daesh heavy machine gun team last week on a boat on the River Tigris. On Tuesday careful surveillance operations allowed a building on the north-western outskirts of Mosul to be identified as a Daesh headquarters. With Iraqi forces keeping close watch from across the Tigris, a flight of Typhoons were able to conduct a highly accurate attack late at night – two Paveway IVs demolished the target.

## [RAF Typhoons bomb a Daesh HQ](#)

RAF fast jets and remotely piloted aircraft have now carried out over 1,200 airstrikes against Daesh, second only to the United States in numbers of Coalition strikes.

In Syria, where the picture is more complicated, the Defence Secretary confirmed that by spring the operation to isolate Raqqa, the last major city Daesh holds in Syria, would be complete. It is expected that thereafter the liberation of the city itself will begin.

As the fight against Daesh enters a new phase, Ministers reviewed Coalition requests to make the training effort more flexible. The Defence Secretary last month authorised UK personnel to deliver training at secured and protected locations in Iraq, in addition to the training sites at Taji, Al Asad, Besmayah and Irbil, where personnel are already deployed. By training forward Britain will now deliver the infantry skills, counter-IED, combat first aid and bridge-building training where Iraqi forces need it. British forces previously mentored Iraqi forces carrying out bridge building ahead of the liberation of eastern Mosul.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Daesh is losing ground, fighters, and funding. Now we need to keep up the pressure on Mosul and Raqqa to deal Daesh a decisive blow. Britain will continue playing its leading role providing vital intelligence, precision airstrikes, and training Iraqi forces where they need it.

The meeting of Coalition Defence Ministers took place following discussions the day before on what more NATO would do to protect its southern borders. Sir Michael confirmed that Britain will send a UK military officer to help lead NATO's newly established training and capacity building mission in Iraq. This effort will help Iraqis defeat Daesh with training including in countering explosive devices. This commitment builds on the work that Britain is already doing in the country, where, we are helping to train Iraqi forces at an unprecedented level, with over 3,000 being trained a month.

Read more about UK activity against Daesh [here](#)

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## [\*\*News story: NATO must improve agility and spend, Defence Secretary urges\*\*](#)

Sir Michael Fallon is pressing NATO members to step up defence spending

during a two-day defence ministerial at NATO's HQ in Brussels, following his first meeting with US Defense Secretary James Mattis.

Reflecting the strength of the UK-US Defence relationship, Sir Michael was the first minister Secretary Mattis called after his appointment and their hour-long meeting at NATO's HQ was the first bilateral working session today.

During their recent phone call, shortly after Secretary Mattis' confirmation, both ministers agreed on the need for NATO to be more agile and responsive so it can respond faster to new threats including cyber and terrorism.

In July NATO confirmed that the UK meets the two per cent spending target, which includes a £178bn equipment plan and rising defence spending every year of this parliament.

The Defence Secretary spoke to fellow ministers to call for other states to spend both 2% overall and to spend 20% of that on new equipment to help tackle threats.

In his face-to-face meetings with Secretary Mattis Sir Michael reassured him that the UK stands shoulder to shoulder with the US in calling for NATO to be more agile to meet new threats in the fields of cyber warfare and counter terrorism.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

NATO has been a guarantee of mutual security for more than half a century. Britain is now calling for our partners to step up and share burdens on spending and help it become more agile in dealing with new threats including cyber and terrorism.

As leading player in the Alliance we recognise the importance of backing up our operational and exercise commitments with investment in new equipment to deal with threats to our security.

Sir Michael is discussing the UK's leadership in NATO. The UK's Enhanced Forward Presence deployment to Estonia is gathering momentum, seen this week in a 600-strong exercise in Sennelager in Germany which features British personnel from the Battle Group for 5 RIFLES. Hundreds of British troops including 5 RIFLES personnel from Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire have spent the last week exercising with four Challenger II tanks, Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicles and Jackals – alongside Estonian, French and Danish troops.

The deployment of 800 British personnel to Estonia under EFP is part of a package of measures that the UK is leading in NATO this year. These include leading the land element of NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force with 3,000 British troops ready to deploy rapidly to threats wherever they arise in the Alliance, and committing RAF Typhoon aircraft to the NATO Southern Air Policing mission to offer reassurance to in the Black Sea region.

Over the two-day ministerial, defence leaders will discuss issues such as

protecting NATO's southern border, developing NATO's deterrence and defence posture, and strengthening the transatlantic bond.

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## [News story: Defence Secretary to attend NATO meeting of Defence Ministers](#)

This week's NATO Defence Ministerial is the first of the year and the first chance for Allies, including our Defence Secretary Michael Fallon, to meet collectively with the new US Defence Secretary Mattis.

Secretary Mattis knows NATO well from his time as Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation, a post he took up 10 years ago. But the security environment facing NATO has itself been transformed in the intervening decade. So this week's meeting is a chance for the 28 Allies to take stock on the challenges and opportunities we face, to the East and South of the Alliance, to reinforce the transatlantic bond and to affirm our commitment to deepening that link and our wider Allied engagement.

For the UK therefore, our priorities will be two-fold:

- to ensure the Alliance continues to make progress on taking forward the ambitious agenda agreed at Warsaw, in particular on modern defence and deterrence towards Russia. On that front (literally), the enhanced forward presence of NATO battlegroups is deploying this Spring to the Baltic States and Poland, with the UK proud to be leading the formation in Estonia, one of our most effective Allies in the Helmand campaign; and
- to take stock of what NATO has done since Warsaw to expand NATO's role in addressing instability on our Southern flank and beyond, including the new NATO Training and Capacity Building activity in Iraq, helping Iraqi security forces build their ability to secure the country after the defeat of Daesh.

All this requires resources and reform.

We are one of only four Allies other than the US currently meeting the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence. We support the new US Administration's focus on this burden-sharing issue.

But a more effective Alliance is not only about money. It's also about continuing to modernise our structures and ways of working to ensure the

Alliance is capable of addressing simultaneously the complex and challenging world around us, including the scourge of terrorism.

So this week's Ministerial will help set this year's agenda. One where NATO builds on the achievements and decisions of the Wales and Warsaw Summits and, looking ahead to the next Summit later this year, shows it is gripping collectively the new challenges we will face together.

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## [HRH The Duchess of Cambridge Joins RAF Air Cadets on Camp](#)

HRH

### **The Duchess of Cambridge Joins RAF Air Cadets on Camp**

The Duchess of Cambridge today (Feb 14<sup>th</sup> 2017) joined young air cadets at RAF Wittering taking part in their first camp.

As the Honorary Air Commandant of the RAF Air Cadets she attended Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire Wing's Skill Development Camp and met several cadets experiencing their first camp.

Cadets and RAF Air Cadet instructors led the Duchess through a range of activities including flying training on a simulator, leadership exercises and more.

The Duchess was also shown the Tutor aircraft which thousands of cadets use each year for air experience flights.



Showing the Duchess around the aircraft was Cadet Sergeant Jordan Bertalaso, 17, of 1406 (Spalding) Squadron, a qualified aerospace instructor.

Cadet Sergeant Jordan Bertalaso said: "Flying is my favourite air cadet activity and it was an honour to show the Duchess the layout of the Tutor cockpit, particularly as the aircraft is used by cadets for air experience.

"It's incredible to have such a high profile Royal as our Patron, especially as she has strong links to the Royal Air Force with her husband being a former pilot."

Spalding air cadets Erin Hope, 14; Emily Empringham, 15, and

Joshua Wait, 14 – also met the Duchess at the aircraft.

Later, HRH also took the controls of a flight simulator with help from Flight Lieutenant Michael Slater. She also joined in a leadership exercise demonstrating effective planning and communication skills.



At the end of the visit, the Duchess was invited to join the cadets and volunteer staff for a camp photo and was presented with a limited edition RAF Air Cadet 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary print by Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore Dawn McCafferty.

This is the third occasion that HRH the Duchess of Cambridge has met with cadets since HRH The Duke of Edinburgh handed patronage of the national youth organisation to her in December 2015.

Her prior engagements involving air cadets have included the Royal International Air Tattoo at RAF Fairford, Gloucestershire in July 2016 and the launch of the RAF Air Cadet 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations in London in February 2016.

The event was held at RAF Wittering, Cambridgeshire, which is one of the oldest RAF bases and has played a key role in military operations and the development of air power since 1916.

Camps are an important part of the RAF Air Cadet experience and take place at RAF bases across the country and are centred around leadership, personal development, aerospace, music and more.



Some senior cadets even take part in the International Air Cadet Exchange Programme which includes countries such as Hong Kong, Canada and Australia.

Commandant Air Cadets, Air Commodore McCafferty said: “It was a delight to see the Duchess again and to witness her engaging with our young cadets and adult volunteers in such a relaxed manner.

“Her personal support of the RAF Air Cadets is very much appreciated and I am sure those lucky enough to meet her today will keep those memories for a lifetime.”

RAF Wittering Station Commander, Group Captain Richard Pratley said: “It has been an honour to welcome HRH The Duchess of Cambridge to

RAF Wittering to see some of the facilities we offer to cadets to help inspire  
the next generation.”

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