



DEBATE PACK

CDP-0002 | 9 January 2018

Debate on a motion relating to Defence

Main Chamber

Thursday 11 January 2018

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Summary

The Government has not given a date for when it intends to publish the National Security Capabilities Review. The Financial Times has reported the review may be split with decisions on the future of the armed forces pushed back until later in the year. From a defence perspective, much attention (and Parliamentary time) has been given to what this might mean for the armed forces. Public speculation has focused on suggestions that the Royal Marines and two major Naval ships, HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion, could be vulnerable. Media have reported Brazil is to buy HMS Ocean when it leaves service this year. The Government's annual update on the Dreadnought programme confirmed a decision on replacing the warhead for the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent will be required this Parliament. Library paper [The defence capability review: equipment](#) provides an introduction to the front-line equipment of the armed forces.

The annual defence equipment plan, setting out the MOD's planned spending on equipment for the next decade, is usually published in January. The 2016 plan laid out £178bn in spending to 2025-26. The National Audit Office said in response "the risks to the affordability of the Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan are greater than at any point since reporting began in 2012". There are particular concerns about the vulnerability of the defence budget to fluctuations in exchange rates – the NAO estimated approximately £18.6bn of the 2016 plan is to be paid in US dollars. The Defence Committee was similarly sceptical of the MOD's ability to find the efficiency savings needed to fund the equipment budget in its report on the acquisition process published in December. How the Department interacts with industry was the subject of the Defence Industrial Policy Refresh, published just before Christmas. The MOD pledged to improve the way defence delivers wider economic and international value, to help UK industry to be internationally competitive and to make it easier for businesses to do business with defence. Library paper [UK defence expenditure](#) looks at current and historical defence spending as well as international comparisons.

The annual report on the Armed Forces Covenant was also published at the tail end of the last session. Maintenance of service accommodation, childcare provision and managing the transition to civilian life were highlighted as areas the MOD intends to focus on in the future. Recruitment and retention of personnel continues to also be a worry, amid media reports that the Army could be further reduced in size. All three services are under their required strength. Library paper [UK defence personnel statistics](#) contains a wealth of statistical information on personnel numbers.

The Ministry of Defence published the following reports at the end of the last session:

- [The United Kingdom's future nuclear deterrent: the Dreadnought Programme 2017 update to Parliament](#)
- [Armed Forces Covenant annual report](#) and [summary](#)
- [Industry for defence and a prosperous Britain: refreshing defence industrial policy](#)

2. Press Articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views of accuracy of external content.

[Defence groups team up to bid for Type 31e frigate contract](#)

Financial Times
Peggy Hollinger
8 January 2018

[Russia 'simulated full-scale war' against Nato, says military commander](#)

Independent
Samuel Osborne
7 January 2018

[£20bn hole in budget delays defence review](#)

The Times
Deborah Haynes
6 January 2018

[Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson 'wins compromise over defence spending'](#)

Daily Telegraph
Gordon Rayner
5 January 2018

[UK defence review delayed by political backlash](#)

Financial Times
David Bond, Peggy Hollinger and George Parker
4 January 2018

[Defence cuts strike at the heart of the special relationship](#)

The Times
Mike Graydon
20 December 2017

[Britain has no warships deployed overseas in 'unprecedented' move blamed on defence cuts](#)

Daily Telegraph
20 December 2017

[Defence Secretary warns of North Korea's 'massive threat' to Britain](#)

Sky News
Greg Heffer
19 December 2017

[Freeze in UK's £56bn defence budget likely, MPs told](#)

Financial Times
David Bond
18 December 2017

[Trident may be removed from MoD budget, MPs told](#)

Guardian
Ewen MacAskill
18 December 2017

[Britain faces serious questions on its defence capability](#)

Financial Times
Lawrence Freedman
15 December 2017

[Britain confronts limits of its military power](#)

Financial Times
12 December 2017

3. Press Releases

[Defence Secretary praises UK efforts as RAF operations against Daesh continue](#)

Ministry of Defence

5 January 2018

In his first visit to Iraq, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson praised UK service personnel as British airstrikes continue to wipe out Daesh.

RAF aircraft flew on operations against the terrorist group every day over the Christmas period, striking terrorist compounds, trucks, mortars and pockets of fighters engaged in close quarter, street fighting with Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The dangers we face are changing and are intensifying rapidly. Eliminating the threat from terrorism is critical to our security at home and abroad. Our brave Armed Forces are working tirelessly, day and night, to defeat Daesh after helping to recover significant territory in Iraq.

Only by defeating this evil and barbaric group for good will we reduce the deadly threat they pose to us, which is why we won't stop until their global network is destroyed.

RAF aircraft have carried out over 1,700 strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria since 2014 and in his first visit to Cyprus, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also met the crews who are playing a vital role in the coalition campaign to totally defeat Daesh.

Fast jets flying out of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus and remotely piloted Reaper aircraft continue to provide support to the SDF on the ground who are clearing the last remaining pockets of Daesh terrorists in Eastern Syria.

Typhoons, Tornados and Reapers worked closely with coalition partners, offering vital intelligence and close air support throughout December, destroying Daesh targets near Abu Kamal, Abu Hardub and Abu Hammam.

He also visited UK personnel in Taji and Baghdad, as well as Kuwait, praising their efforts as part of the UK's contribution to the global coalition fight Daesh.

In Kuwait, he met with US Lieutenant General Paul Funk the Commanding General of the global coalition as well as Major General Felix Gedney, Deputy Commander-Strategy and Support and the most senior UK officer in the military campaign against Daesh.

They discussed the success of the military campaign in both Iraq and Syria, but also reflected that Daesh have not yet been defeated as

pockets of fighters still remain and will continue to pose a threat at home and abroad.

In Baghdad, Mr Williamson met with the Iraqi Defence Minister and visited the Iraqi National Security Agency, commending the efforts of the Iraqi Security Forces and reiterating the UK's commitment to the long-term security and stability of Iraq. This follows from the Prime Minister's pledge in her recent visit to address the evolving threat from Daesh and countering the dispersal of foreign fighters as Daesh is squeezed out of the battlefield in Syria and Iraq

He also visited UK troops stationed in Taji who, along with over 600 British soldiers on the ground in Iraq, are helping to train that country's forces. UK troops have so far helped train around 60,000 Iraqi Security Forces in battle-winning infantry, counter-IED, engineering and combat medical skills. In addition to personnel on the ground in Iraq, the UK has provided over 1,400 military personnel from all three Services as part of its three year involvement.

Defence Secretary announces £250M investment in new homes for service families

Ministry of Defence

24 November 2017

The significant investment will see nearly 1000 new homes built in three locations across Salisbury Plain, the British Army's largest training area in the UK. The locations for the new housing are Bulford, Larkhill and Ludgershall.

The new homes, which will be built by British construction company Lovell, will offer modern three and four bedroom accommodation, as well as a number of bungalows and adapted homes for families with specific needs, such as wheelchair access. Work on the new homes, which are being built under the Army Basing Programme (ABP), is expected to be completed in May 2020.

The new homes will support Service personnel and their families relocating from Germany in 2019 and also units moving within the UK.

Pre-construction work on the project has already begun, including off-site highways to facilitate access to the new homes. The returning troops can expect modern accommodation, as well as access to catering, retail and leisure facilities.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

This considerable investment in nearly 1,000 new homes is a reflection of our commitment to supporting Armed Forces families. Service families make an immense contribution to our country and I'm delighted to announce this £250 million funding for new homes to welcome our troops relocating from Germany.

The £250 million investment comes alongside a further £90 million in road and utility improvements in support of the three developments. £1.1 billion has already pledged to the Salisbury Plain area for living and working accommodation 'behind the wire' including 2,500 bed spaces for single soldiers and the construction, conversion or refurbishment of nearly 250 other buildings such as offices, garages, workshops and mess facilities.

The Army is also working closely with Wiltshire Council to ensure that the soldiers and their families have access to all of the services they need, including education and health facilities. Wiltshire Council is spending over £20 million of the MOD's contribution towards local community services in support of education provision across all age ranges.

Defence Minister Tobias Ellwood said:

Investing not only in new homes but in all the things that help to make a place feel like home, such as education, infrastructure and leisure facilities, will make a big difference for those returning to the UK after being posted abroad. This boost to the area will provide a close-knit community for Armed Forces and their families for years to come.

The Army Basing Programme has also recently completed building and refurbishment of accommodation at a number of other sites across the country in support of Troops relocating from Germany and within the UK. The ABP has also invested in new facilities in Kinloss, Leuchars, Catterick, South Cerney and North Luffenham, and significant refurbishments have taken place at a number of other MOD sites including York, Aldershot and Thorney Island.

[Defence Secretary hosts first meeting in UK with Secretary Mattis](#) **Ministry of Defence** **10 November 2017**

The Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson has held his first bilateral meeting with his US counterpart, Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, in London today.

Both have just returned from NATO and counter-Daesh Ministerial meetings in Brussels, where the alliance agreed to adapt its command structure to better reflect the security environment, announcing the establishment of two new headquarters: an Atlantic Command and a Logistics Command.

NATO is the cornerstone of UK and US defence and both nations have been leading calls for NATO to adapt to future threats. The meeting in London focused on three themes: current threats, capability and shared prosperity.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

From fighting in the trenches of the Great War to countering Russian aggression and tackling Daesh today, the UK has been America's closest partner for a century. Today our countries are cooperating on everything from operations and intelligence to innovation and this meeting is an opportunity to continue strengthening our special relationship.

Despite being close to defeat in Iraq and Syria, Daesh remains a concern for the UK and US and the British Defence Secretary reaffirmed his support to the US-led coalition. The pair also discussed the increasing assertiveness from the Kremlin, as the UK stands side by side with US and NATO allies, leading the enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Estonia and contributing soldiers to the US-led Battlegroup in Poland.

Amongst only six NATO countries meeting the commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defence, the UK and US are investing heavily in next generation technology, including the F-35 aircraft. US F-35s will fly from the HMS Queen Elizabeth carrier in 2021, demonstrating the close relationship between the two countries.

The defence trading relationship between the UK and US is worth £3 billion a year and as the UK looks beyond Brexit, both countries hope to strengthen that relationship too.

Defence Secretary commits to boost diversity in the Armed Forces

Ministry of Defence

26 October 2017

The visit took place during Black History Month, a nationwide celebration of black history, arts and culture held every October.

Sir Michael Fallon met the unit's engagement team, who have been specifically set up to build links with minority communities across London, and congratulated the Royal Navy's longest serving female reservist Chief Petty Officer Evadne Gordon who joined 40 years ago and whose family moved from Jamaica to the UK in the 1950s.

The visit included a meeting with Commander Richmal Hardinge, HMS President's second ever female Commanding Officer, and a chance to speak to a group of Sea Cadets, following this month's approval of 31 new cadet units in state schools, five of which are in London and the South East.

The Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, said:

We are working hard to ensure the Armed Forces, like our cadets, better represent the society they serve but there is still much more to do. We want more sailors, soldiers and airmen to come from minority and ethnic

communities. More diverse armed forces are a stronger armed forces; that has to start amongst the junior ranks and work all the way up to chief of the defence staff.

The Armed Forces have committed to ensuring that at least 10 per cent of all new recruits come from minority and ethnic communities by 2020, with intake levels currently at 7.2 per cent.

To achieve this a set of networks have been established within the Armed Forces, which is part of the diversity and inclusion strategy.

In June the Defence Secretary attended the unveiling of the first ever memorial to African and Caribbean servicemen and women during the First and Second World Wars.

15,000 soldiers from the West Indies Regiment saw action in France, Palestine, Egypt and Italy during the First World War - 2,500 of them were killed or wounded. These brave men from the West Indies won 81 medals for bravery, whilst 49 were mentioned in despatches.

55,000 men from Africa fought for the British during the First World War and hundreds of thousands of others carried out vital roles. They came from Nigeria, the Gambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Malawi, Kenya and Ghana. It is estimated that 10,000 Africans were killed. African troops were awarded 166 decorations for bravery.

Defence Secretary announces Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Board

**Ministry of Defence
3 October 2017**

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon has announced that the first meeting of the cross-Government Armed Forces Covenant and Veterans Board will take place on Thursday 26 October.

Co-chaired by Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon and First Secretary of State Damian Green, and reporting to the Prime Minister, the board underlines the Government's enduring commitment to the Armed Forces community.

Meeting biannually, the Board will drive forward the existing Armed Forces Covenant commitments community across all Government departments responsible for delivery, with a specific focus on the priority areas of healthcare, including mental health. Housing, education, and employment opportunities are also other areas which will be covered. In addition, the Defence Secretary and the First Secretary of State will meet separately with leading Service charities and the single Service Family Federations to discuss the Covenant on an annual basis. This will ensure the views of the wider Armed Forces Community are represented in government decisions.

Government initiatives delivered to date through the Armed Forces Covenant include:

- The Forces Help to Buy scheme (MOD), which has allowed thousands of Armed Forces personnel and their families to borrow up to half their salary to get on the housing ladder.
- The Armed Forces Covenant Fund, which provides £10M per annum to support mutually beneficial projects and programmes being delivered by organisations across the UK in partnership with the Armed Forces Community.
- The Job Centre Plus Armed Forces Champions (DWP) helps current and former members of the Armed Forces and their families access Jobcentre Plus services
- The Transition, Intervention, and Liaison (TIL) veterans' mental health service (NHS) acts as a front door to a range of mental health services across the health and care system for veterans.
- The Service Pupil Premium (DfE), which is paid to schools to engage with service children to mitigate any adverse impact of family mobility and parental deployment. The Board will also seek to maximise the potential of the Armed Forces Community through mutually beneficial partnerships with businesses, as well as with local communities throughout the UK.

[UK offers deep security partnership with EU post-Brexit in the face of growing global threats](#)

MoD, DFID, DExEU, FCO

12 September 2017

The UK Government has offered to contribute military assets to EU operations, cooperate on sanctions and agree joint positions on foreign policy as part of a deep security partnership with the EU after Brexit.

In a renewed demonstration of the UK's commitment to European security, the latest future partnership paper signals the Government's willingness to partner with the EU in the face of ever-growing global threats.

It makes clear the UK will seek to use our assets, capabilities and influence to combat the shared challenges facing the continent — including illegal migration, terrorism, cyber and state-based threats and amounts to a security partnership 'that is deeper than any other third country and that reflects our shared interest'.

There is a significant amount of collaboration between the UK and EU on defence, security and development.

The paper lays out how Britain will want to build a new partnership with the EU that goes beyond existing third country arrangements, and reflects our shared interests and values of upholding democracy and protecting peace across Europe and the world.

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union David Davis said:

After we leave the European Union we will continue to face shared threats to our security, our shared values and our way of life. It's in our mutual interest to work closely with the EU and its member states to challenge terrorism and extremism, illegal migration, cyber-crime, and conventional state-based military aggression.

Today's paper highlights Britain's world class diplomacy and defence capabilities, our leading contribution to international development, and our desire to continue to use these as part of a deep and special partnership with the EU.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

As we leave the EU, the UK's commitment to European security is undiminished. We will pursue a global foreign policy, and continue to work in partnership with our neighbours to promote peace, democracy and security in our continent and across the world.

In recent years, the European Union has helped achieve crucial foreign policy goals – from bringing Iran to the negotiating table, to uniting in response to Russian aggression in Ukraine. We want this EU role to continue after we leave.

This is why, in addition to stronger relations with EU member states, we also envisage a strong UK-EU partnership on foreign and defence policy following our departure. This will allow us to continue our work in tackling the shared challenges we face worldwide.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

At a time of increased threats and international instability the UK remains unwavering in its commitment to uphold European security. With the largest defence budget in Europe, the largest Navy British troops and planes deployed across land, air and sea in Europe, our role in the continent's defence has never been more vital.

As we leave the EU, the UK and our European allies will ensure a close partnership that meets these shared challenges head-on.

The paper highlights the UK's successful military cooperation with the EU on tackling piracy off the Horn of Africa, to joint defence projects with the EU — including the Eurofighter Typhoon aircraft.

The UK has the largest defence budget in Europe, and is the only European country that meets both the NATO target of spending 2 per

cent of GDP on defence, with 20 per cent of this on equipment, and the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of gross national income (GNI) on international development.

The UK has also committed to invest at least 50 per cent of development spend in fragile states and regions. The UK and France are the two European permanent members of the UN Security Council and the only European countries with an independent nuclear deterrent, while UK proscriptions and asset freezes are the basis of many of the EU sanctions on terrorist organisations.

Defence Secretary reaffirms leadership in NATO on Washington trip

Ministry of Defence

7 July 2017

During his first meeting with US Secretary for Defense James Mattis in the American capital, the Defence Secretary said Britain had shown leadership across the alliance and has helped encourage an increase of more than £40bn of defence investment by NATO states.

The UK has consistently met NATO's 2% of GDP spending target, Sir Michael said in Washington, and has lead by pressing allies to increase their own fiscal commitment. In the past year NATO countries have committed around £43bn more towards collective defence, at a time when a large number of assurance and deterrence activity is taking place across NATO's eastern European flank.

He set out how the threats to security are growing and changing, but reflected on the fact that since his visit to Washington in 2015 the UK has delivered by committing to 2%, sailed her first Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carrier and sent thousands of personnel on NATO exercises and deployments by land, sea and air.

Sir Michael said:

Today our nations are facing a wave of multiple, concurrent, diverse global threats. From Islamist extremism, Russian state aggression, sponsors of terror and North Korea testing nuclear bombs and firing off missiles, to the insidious spread of misinformation and Wannacy like cyber attacks. Such events demand an international response, so we see Brexit as an opportunity not to step back from European defence but to step up to strengthen Euro-Atlantic security. In particular, we're bolstering our bonds with NATO, the cornerstone of our defence.

Sir Michael met Secretary Mattis in Brussels last week at the NATO Defence Ministerial meeting, where they discussed a range of security issues including Syria, where US jets struck in response to a chemical weapon attack. Sir Michael explained at the Pentagon how the UK is acting to protect the UK and allies from threats.

He said:

We're performing a pivotal role in the Counter-Daesh Coalition, attacking Daesh positions, training local forces, using our cyber capabilities to disrupt their activities, an overall contribution which is second only to the US.

And he discussed the impending fall of Mosul, a key location in Daesh's ill-fated, so-called caliphate.

He said:

It's striking to think that back then Daesh were closing in on the gates to Baghdad, yet now they are close to defeat in Mosul.

Defence Secretary steps up UK commitments to NATO

Ministry of Defence

29 June 2017

At a meeting of NATO Defence Ministers today, the Defence Secretary confirmed:

- The Royal Navy will take the lead of half of NATO's maritime forces for a year.
- Offensive cyber support to NATO operations.
- Increased UK support for advising the Afghan Government, and its defence and security forces.
- Strengthened cooperation on Maritime Patrol Aircraft.

The meeting also confirmed that Britain continues to meet its commitment of spending 2% of GDP on defence, as well as meeting the target of 20% defence spend on equipment and capabilities.

Leading NATO's maritime forces

HMS Duncan, a state of the art Type 45 Destroyer, will lead NATO's Standing Maritime Naval Group 2 (SNMG2), providing reassurance and deterrence in the Black Sea, as well as commanding NATO's counter migration activity in the Mediterranean. The naval force will also exercise together to improve the Alliance's readiness and ability to work together on operations, as well as conducting port visits in the region, including to Ukraine.

HMS Enterprise will also lead Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2 (SNMCMG2) from July this year. The Mine Countermeasures Group is a multinational, integrated maritime force, made up of vessels from a number of NATO countries. The group is mainly based in the Mediterranean and is capable of searching for and disposing of explosive ordnance. HMS Enterprise will be the flagship for the force, and will be joined by HMS Pembroke in the second half of 2017.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

As part of our leadership within the Alliance, we're stepping up our NATO commitments. Whether it's in the cyber domain, where I'm committing UK support to NATO operations, or on the high seas with HMS Duncan and HMS Enterprise leading half of the Alliance's maritime forces in the Mediterranean, the Aegean and the Black Sea, Britain is playing its full part.

Strengthening cooperation on Maritime Patrol Aircraft

On the margins of today's meeting, Sir Michael signed a Statement of Intent on North Atlantic Maritime Patrol with his US and Norwegian counterparts. The agreement enhances collaboration on each nation's P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft programmes and will provide NATO Allies with multiple benefits in the maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine areas.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

The P-8A aircraft will play a vital role in protecting the UK's nuclear deterrent, the two new Queen Elizabeth Class carriers and supporting our NATO Allies.

By investing in these aircraft, as part of our £178 billion defence equipment programme, we're showing that we're serious in tackling the threats on NATO's North Atlantic flank.

And in stepping up our cooperation with the US and Norway on maritime patrol around our shores, we will help keep Britain safer and more secure.

Stepping up to counter terror around the world

The Defence Secretary also confirmed today that Britain is stepping up its support to Afghanistan, with around 85 extra service personnel to support NATO's mission in the country.

Britain has an enduring commitment to Afghanistan, and supporting the Government and the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces (ANDSF) helps to prevent the country from becoming a safe haven for terror.

The increase of UK personnel comes in response to a NATO request, which was made to all partner nations, for additional troops to support the Alliance's train, advise and assist mission in the country.

The additional troops will continue to work in non-combat roles mentoring the Afghan Army and Police, the Afghan Air Force, and will provide further support to the ANDSF in training and leadership development.

Underlining Britain's leadership within NATO, the uplift will add to the already significant contribution of 500 troops the UK already makes to NATO's Resolute Support Mission.

Endgame for Daesh in Mosul

Three years on since the start of the so-called caliphate was proclaimed in Mosul, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon underlined that Daesh faces its endgame in the city where it originally launched its ideological campaign of terror and violence.

Sir Michael said that the terrorist group faces irreversible momentum and progress from local forces on the ground, and UK and Coalition aircraft in the skies. UK aircrew have now hit over 700 targets in support of operations to liberate Mosul since last year. In addition to operations over Mosul, the RAF has so far struck 69 targets in and around Raqqa in support of Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) advancing on the city from the north, east and west.

With Daesh losing ground on two fronts in Mosul and Raqqa, around 70% of territory once controlled by the terror group in Iraq and 51% in Syria, has now been liberated. This amounts to over 4 million Iraqis and Syrians who have been freed from Daesh tyranny.

4. PQs

[National Security](#)

18 Dec 2017 | 117948

Asked by: Luke Pollard

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans a public consultation on the defence aspects of the National Security and Capability review.

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

The National Security Capability Review is a cross-Government exercise being led by the National Security Adviser. Whether, when, or to what extent this work is made public will be determined in due course.

[Defence: Finance](#)

13 Dec 2017 | 117741

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent assessment his Department has made as to whether the 2 per cent of GDP spending target is sufficient to meet UK defence needs over the next 20 years.

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

The commitment to spend 2% of GDP on Defence came after a thorough examination of threats and risks, after which the Government decided on an appropriate level of funding. The 2% commitment should be seen as a base and not a target.

The Government are committed to spending 2% of GDP on Defence until 2022. Commitments on Defence spending beyond this point will be laid out in future Spending Reviews.

[EU Defence Policy](#)

05 Dec 2017 | 115679

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will list the defence assets being considered for pooling under the Permanent Structured Cooperation; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Mark Lancaster | Department: Ministry of Defence

The aim of Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is to strengthen EU Member States' cooperation in military matters. PESCO is voluntary and works on an opt-in basis.

Member States have suggested more than 40 potential projects for PESCO, none of which propose a standing military unit or pooled assets although a number of projects seek to establish a centre of excellence, logistics hub, or medical command. The UK and other Member States are committed to preventing unnecessary duplication between the EU and NATO, including the establishment of military forces where that need is already met by NATO.

Defence: Assets

01 Dec 2017 | 115496

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, in which common defence assets held on the EU register of assets the UK has a share.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The EU Force Catalogue provides a qualitative and quantitative analysis of the military capabilities that Member States could make available to the EU. Member States contribute to EU capabilities under an agreed common funding mechanism but do not have shares in assets per se, and deployment of national capabilities in support of EU operations and missions remains a sovereign decision.

Trident

28 Nov 2017 | 114667

Asked by: Jo Stevens

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to reduce defence expenditure in some areas to pay for the cost of trident replacement.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Dreadnought submarine replacement programme remains within its budget and will provide the ultimate guarantee of our national security.

Topical Questions

27 Nov 2017 | 632 c21

Asked by: Sir Hugo Swire

At the risk of being given an honorary captaincy, may I congratulate my right hon. Friend on his job? I am sure he will do it extremely well. In his ongoing and delicate discussions with the Treasury, will he remain aware, first, that there are those of us on this side of the House who believe that the defence budget has been pared back about as far as it can be, and secondly, that when it comes to Trident renewal many of us on this side of the House do not believe it should be part of the defence budget? Indeed, it distorts the defence budget, and if that is part of his

argument, he will have considerably more support than perhaps he knows.

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

Everything that my right hon. Friend has raised will be part of the review. He has raised the important question of nuclear capability being part of the defence budget. It has traditionally not sat as part of the defence budget; that changed only post-2010. It is vital to look at all options as part of the national security and capability review, and I look forward to speaking to him and seeking his advice and thoughts on the issues that he has raised.

[Partner in Defence](#)

27 Nov 2017 | 632 c12

Asked by: Phil Wilson

Our amphibious capability is important to our defence partners, so is the future of HMS Bulwark and HMS Albion secure?

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

There has been an awful lot of speculation in the press about all of our capabilities. As part of the national security capability review, we have been asked to look at everything that we do, but I am not going to start any speculation about what the results will be. I have made it clear that I want to look at the evidence and the details, and we are not going to be rushed into any decisions.

[Partner in Defence](#)

27 Nov 2017 | 632 cc11-2

Asked by: Jack Lopresti

7. What steps he is taking to ensure that the UK remains an effective defence partner. [902553]

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

The MOD works closely with our allies and partners, making a crucial contribution to Britain's status as a global power. The challenging global security context, including a resurgent Russia, makes our relationships all the more vital. In my first three weeks, I have met Defence Ministers from the US, France and other NATO members, and I will continue to engage widely.

Asked by: Jack Lopresti

Given the current financial pressures within the MOD, does my right hon. Friend agree with Lieutenant General Ben Hodges, who was the commander of the US army in Europe and who said that Britain risks

“going into a different sort of category”

of ally if we cannot maintain our capability commitments?

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

When I had the good fortune to sit down with Secretary Mattis to discuss our partnership, what struck me was the value that the United States puts on everything that Britain does, and the contribution our men and equipment make. He was left in no doubt that that commitment—that resolute support that we have always provided to the United States—will always be there.

Asked by: Madeleine Moon

Despite what the Secretary of State says, Lieutenant General Hodges and James Mattis have both said that we will lose our clout in NATO and our place at the top table if the cuts continue. Will the new Secretary of State commit to stopping the cuts to our capability, and will he make sure that Britain stays at the top table and that we have the capability to defend ourselves and our allies?

Answering member: Gavin Williamson | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Government's commitment to making sure that we have the very best for our armed forces has always been clear. The rising defence budget, which is going from £36 billion to £40 billion, is evidence of that commitment. [Interruption.] The United States knows quite clearly that we will always be there in support of them, regardless of what the hon. Lady's leader may wish. [Interruption.]

[...]

**[Defence: Procurement](#)
08 Nov 2017 | 110527**

Asked by: Kevan Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what weight he attached to the marking criteria for National Security Objective 3 in developing each of his Department's contracts whose value is £10 million or above for which that objective was taken into account.

Answering member: Tobias Ellwood | Department: Ministry of Defence

Between publication of the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) in November 2015 and 31 March 2017, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) awarded nearly 150 contracts with a value of more than £10 million. Around 20 of these are worth more than £100 million, with none over £1 billion. These figures do not include extensions to existing contracts, for example the Type 26 manufacture contract or the revised UK Military Flying Training System agreements. Information about contracts awarded during the 2017-18 financial year is still being validated, so a full picture of new contracts awarded since 1 April 2017 is not yet available.

Records are not held centrally for all of these contracts and therefore comprehensive information could be provided only at disproportionate

cost. However, available records show that none of the contracts over £100 million awarded during that period included specific criteria relating to National Security Objective 3. For some contracts, the issues outlined in the objective had been considered but not explicitly rendered into the award criteria. Others were awarded on a single-source basis and, for some, contract award criteria had been set prior to publication of the SDSR.

National Security Objective 3 covers an extensive range of subjects in relation to promoting UK prosperity: strengthening relationships with international partners, creating a more open, innovative defence sector, enhancing support to exports, and investing in skills and capabilities. The wide-ranging nature of the objective therefore means it is difficult to condense into a set of contract award criteria with relevant weightings. Instead, officials responsible for procuring defence capabilities are expected to consider these issues throughout the procurement process, from setting requirements through to awarding a contract and beyond.

The steps we are taking to help further promote UK prosperity will be outlined in more detail in our forthcoming refreshed defence industrial policy. This will include information on how our approach to defence procurement is designed to help the UK's defence and security industries grow and compete successfully.

[Defence](#)

23 Oct 2017 | 107999

Asked by: John Spellar

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, which defence systems and equipment his Department regards as critical for retaining sovereign defence capability.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

In the National Security through Technology White Paper 2012 (Cm8278) the Government committed to take action to protect our freedom of action and operational advantage where essential for national security. The White Paper describes four general cases in which this is most likely to apply, with examples, including aspects of cryptographic production, deployment and support, and weapons and propulsion systems for the UK's nuclear deterrent. We do not comment on the precise circumstances or aspects of capabilities we might regard as critical on national security grounds.

[Defence: Industry](#)

09 Oct 2017 | 10169

Asked by: Rebecca Long Bailey

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether he plans to publish a defence industrial review.

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Ministry of Defence is actively involved in the cross-Government work on an industrial strategy. Many of the themes in this apply to defence, and we do not plan a separate defence industrial strategy or review. However, as part of the recently announced National Security and Capability Review, we are refreshing defence industrial policy and taking further action to help the UK's defence industry grow and compete successfully.

[Defence: Reviews](#)

10 Jul 2017 | 2912

Asked by: Wayne David

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to produce a new Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

The Government conducted a comprehensive Strategic Defence and Security Review in 2015. However, the evolving global security situation means we constantly keep under review the best way to keep Britain safe.

[Defence Spending](#)

10 Jul 2017 | 627 cc14-5

Asked by: Michael Tomlinson

What plans the Government has to increase the defence budget in this Parliament.

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

Our defence budget for 2017-18 is £36 billion, and we are committed to increasing it by at least half a per cent above inflation every year of this Parliament. In addition, we are committed to continuing to meet the NATO guideline to spend at least 2% of our GDP on defence until 2022. Those two commitments will ensure that our armed forces can help to keep Britain safe.

[Leaving the EU: UK Defence Policy](#)

30 Jan 2017 | 620 c649

Asked by: Stephen Timms

The UK has long played a leading role in EU missions, including Operation Sophia in the Mediterranean and Operation Atalanta off the horn of Africa. Given the renewed commitment expressed by the Prime Minister, to which the Secretary of State has drawn attention, does he

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Department: Ministry of Defence

These are voluntary missions in which we participate not simply because they are European, but because they are in our own national interest—curbing piracy off the horn of Africa, bringing peace to the Balkans and helping to stop the flow of migrants across the Mediterranean. The right hon. Gentleman is right that we will have the opportunity, if we wish to do so, to co-operate with our European partners on future missions where it is in our national interest.

Defence: Infrastructure**23 Jan 2017 | 60164****Asked by: Kirsten Oswald**

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, pursuant to the Written Ministerial Statement of 13 January 2017, Defence Infrastructure Reform, what capital (a) investment is planned to be made and (b) receipts are planned to be realised in each of the 10 years of the programme.

Answering member: Mark Lancaster | Department: Ministry of Defence

As set out in the Better Defence Estate strategy published in November 2016 the Ministry of Defence will be investing £4 billion over 10 years to create a Defence estate which supports capability by being of better quality, more cost effective and efficient, as well as 30% smaller overall by 2040.

The strategy will also derive savings of more than £140 million in running costs over ten years, rising to nearly £3 billion by 2040, which can be re-invested back into Defence.

The profile across the 10-year programme of planned costs, savings and receipts is being refined to support the investment approval decisions for the implementation programmes.

The recommendations of our review into how the estate is managed and infrastructure decisions taken across Defence, which were set out in my Written Statement of 13 January 2017 (HCWS410), will help ensure that every pound we spend on our estate represents optimum value for money.

5. Other Parliamentary material

5.1 Debates

[UK Defence Forces](#)

HL Deb 23 Nov 2017 | 787 cc293-333

[UK Amphibious Capability](#)

HC Deb 21 Nov 2017 | 631 cc297-323WH

[Defence Aerospace Industrial Strategy](#)

HC Deb 16 Nov 2017 | 631 cc668-89

[Defence Capability](#)

HC Deb 19 Oct 2017 | 629 cc396-420WH

[A Better Defence Estate Strategy](#)

HC Deb 21 Feb 2017 | 621 cc293-317WH

[Armed Forces: Capability](#)

HL Deb 12 Jan 2017 | 777 cc2122-61

5.2 Statements

[Future Nuclear Deterrent: 2017 Update to Parliament](#)

20 Dec 2017 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS377

The Secretary of State for Defence (Gavin Williamson): On 18 May 2011, the then Secretary of State for Defence, (Dr Liam Fox) made an oral statement to the House (Official Report, column 351) announcing the approval of the Initial Gate investment stage for the procurement of the successor to the VANGUARD Class ballistic missile submarines. He also placed in the Library of the House a report "[The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Submarine Initial Gate Parliamentary Report](#)".

As confirmed in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, this Government is committed to publishing an annual report on the programme. I am today publishing the sixth report, "The United Kingdom's Future Nuclear Deterrent: The Dreadnought Programme, 2017 Update to Parliament". A copy has been placed in the Library of the House.

[Defence Industrial Policy Refresh](#)

20 Dec 2017 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS374

The Secretary of State for Defence (Gavin Williamson): Today I am publishing the Defence Industrial Policy. This meets a commitment in the 2015 National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review. A copy has been placed in the Library of the House and on the Gov.uk website. Building on the National Security through Technology

White Paper of 2012, the Policy focuses on our overall engagement with defence industry, and how this is best structured to serve our national security objectives.

Industry, working alongside our Armed Forces and defence civilians delivers a crucial part of the United Kingdom's national security objectives: to protect our people, project influence overseas and promote national prosperity. Industry delivers vital capabilities to our Armed Forces, and is an important part of the UK economy.

As a customer of the defence industry, the Government has a responsibility to obtain the right capability for our Armed Forces and to ensure value for money for the taxpayer in the goods and services that we buy. Alongside this, we also want to create an environment that encourages a thriving and globally competitive UK defence sector as an important part of our wider industrial base.

Since 2015, we have worked with business of all sizes to understand how we can support growth and competitiveness in the sector, as well as our wider national security objectives. The refreshed Defence Industrial Policy sets out the results of this work.

It identifies what has been achieved so far, as well as the areas where further work is needed. In defining how Government and industry can work together to generate value and strengthen our security, it is part of a continuing process of engagement.

There are three strands to our policy approach:

- Improving the way defence delivers wider economic and international value, and national security objectives.
- Helping UK industry in its plans to be internationally competitive, innovative and secure.
- Making it easier to do business with defence, particularly for innovators, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and non-traditional defence suppliers.

We are committed to delivering value for money for defence and a fair return to industry by implementing the single source contracting regulations in new and modified non-competitive contracts, as set out in the Defence Reform Act (2014).

We will strengthen industrial collaboration with our key allies and partners, including in the context of NATO, the US National Technology and Industrial Base and the European Technology and Industrial Base, with which UK industry and research will remain closely linked.

The National Shipbuilding Strategy, published in September 2017, sets out our approach for driving prosperity through export-led growth, competition and a focus on national and regional productivity and skills. It is an important pathfinder to improve the way we measure, assess and apply prosperity benefits in other areas of defence procurement.

To deliver this refreshed approach we will need to continue our close partnership with industry in the UK, while maintaining our commitment to open competition.

[Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report](#)

18 Dec 2017 | Written statements | House of Commons | HCWS360

The Secretary of State for Defence (Gavin Williamson): I am today laying before the House the 2017 Armed Forces Covenant annual report. The Armed Forces Act 2011 set out the requirement for the Defence Secretary to report progress annually to Parliament. The Covenant is a promise by the nation to ensure that those who serve, or have served, and their families are treated fairly and suffer no disadvantage. The sacrifices made by serving personnel, veterans and their families should be recognised accordingly. The report describes what the Government, and wider society, has done to uphold the principles of the Covenant across the UK.

The Covenant is not only a debt owed by the nation to the Armed Forces community, it is also a mutually beneficial partnership between the military family and the wider society that they serve. The annual report highlights just some of the excellent initiatives being taken in local communities to deepen relationships and that the publication of the report today coincides with the announcement of O2 as the 2,000th business signing of the Covenant demonstrates the ongoing success in building partnerships with the private sector.

A consistent theme of this year's report is a drive toward coordinating services across the core areas of the Covenant. The launch of the Veterans' Gateway, funded by the Covenant and delivered by a Royal British Legion led-consortium, and the work of the Department of Health-led Transition Intervention and Liaison Services, in close co-ordination with Defence, are just two examples of working across organisational boundaries to provide a more coherent and focused service to the people that need it the most.

In the public sector new guidance for Local Authorities published this year will help to improve the consistency of delivery at a local level. As well as identifying examples of best practice the guidance explains how local support groups and organisations can share resources to help integrate military and civilian communities.

The mobile nature of Service life can lead to disadvantage in a number of areas, one of which is access to education. The inclusion of Service children as a target group for universities in their fair access agreements, acknowledges this and the ability to identify Service children when moving between schools will help to minimise the impact to their education.

The Government's new Ministerial Covenant and Veterans Board will also ensure a more coordinated approach, confirming that providing support to Service personnel, veterans and their families remains a top priority, and the report also sets out the key commitments for 2018.

The report has been compiled in consultation with other Government Departments, the Devolved Administrations, and the external members of the Covenant Reference Group.

I am grateful to them all for their contributions, and their continued support as together we ensure our Armed Forces community receive the support they deserve.

5.3 Early Day Motions

[National Security and Capability Review](#)

EDM 712 (session 2017-19)

19 December 2017

Jack Lopresti

That this House notes the Government's National Security and Capability Review; recognises concerns about the adequacy of the current financial settlement for the Ministry of Defence; urges the Government to undertake a thorough Strategic Defence Review to ensure adequate resources for HM Armed Forces, so that they may safeguard the nation in uncertain times.

[Mechanised Infantry Vehicle Programme](#)

EDM 574 (session 2017-19)

21 November 2017

David TC Davies

That this House recognises the investment by companies in the Armoured Fighting Vehicle industry in the UK; welcomes the commitment by these companies in building facilities and developing the skills required to maintain this industry in the UK; further recognises that wages in this UK industry are significantly higher than the national average; notes the recent Ministry of Defence Armoured Fighting Vehicle contract awards to companies overseas without competition; and urges the Ministry of Defence to ensure all future Armoured Fighting Vehicle programmes are openly competed at the Prime Contract level, including the important multibillion pound Mechanised Infantry Vehicle programme for the Army's new wheeled vehicle fleet, to support this resurgent British industry and provide highly skilled jobs in less economically advantaged areas of the UK.

[Royal Navy's amphibious assault capability](#)

EDM 391 (session 2017-19)

12 October 2017

Luke Pollard

That this House notes the recent speculation that the Government is considering scrapping the two Devonport-based Royal Navy amphibious assault ships, HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark; further notes that scrapping these warships would mean removing the Royal Navy's entire

world-class amphibious assault capabilities; observes that these defence cuts risks severely reducing the role of the Royal Marines in future conflicts; highlights that this would create a significant capability gap for the UK; acknowledges speculation that equipment, programmes and personnel in the Army and Royal Air Force are also being considered for cuts in the Government's capability review; calls on the Government to end speculation around HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark and the strength of the Royal Marines by pledging to safeguard these Royal Navy warships and the Royal Marines; and further calls on the Government to reaffirm long-term commitment to the UK's world-class amphibious assault capability.

UN Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty (No. 2)

EDM 374 (session 2017-19)

11 October 2017

Caroline Lucas

That this House notes that on 7 July 2017 the UN concluded a legally-binding Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons with the object of leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons; welcomes the fact that the treaty was adopted by 122 states with just one vote against and one abstention; believes that the treaty will be a significant and positive step towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons; recalls that during a debate on Government plans for replacement of the UK's nuclear weapons system the Secretary of State for Defence said that that Government shared the vision of a world that is without nuclear weapons, achieved through multilateral disarmament; is disappointed that the Government did not participate in the UN negotiations; further notes that the treaty opened for signature at the UN on 20 September 2017, and has already been signed by 53 nations and ratified by 3; and calls on the Government to develop and publish an appropriate transition plan so that the UK is prepared and ready to sign and ratify the treaty at the first opportunity.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

EDM 225 (session 2017-19)

19 July 2017

Caroline Lucas

That this House notes that on 7 July 2017 the United Nations concluded a legally-binding Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons with the object of leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons; welcomes the fact that the treaty was adopted by 122 states with just one vote against and one abstention; believes that the treaty will be a significant and positive step towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons; recalls that during a debate on Government plans for replacement of the UK's nuclear weapons system the Secretary of State for Defence said that this Government share the vision of a world that is without nuclear weapons, achieved through multilateral disarmament; is disappointed that the Government did not participate in the UN negotiations; further notes that the treaty will be opened for signature

at the United Nations on 20 September 2017; and calls on the Government to develop and publish an appropriate transition plan so that the UK is prepared and ready to sign and ratify the treaty at the first opportunity.

MOD Estate

EDM 939 (session 2016-17)

9 February 2017

Stephen Gethins

That this House notes the Ministry of Defence's decision to make changes to its estate and infrastructure; calls on the Government to take a modern, inclusive and family-friendly approach as it remodels its estate by providing facilities and accommodation in bases, such as Leuchars Station, that meet the needs of all members of the armed services and their families; is aware of the particular importance to armed services families of accommodation being affordable as well as of high quality; expects that armed services families will be fully consulted in the process as the Ministry of Defence reshapes its facilities and accommodation; emphasises the importance of this for Leuchars Station which has the potential to become a hub for the Army in Scotland; and stresses that these requirements must be met to ensure that the Ministry of Defence's estate can properly benefit families, so they feel settled and valued both as members of the armed services and as part of their local community.

Ministry of Defence site closures

EDM 914 (session 2016-17)

2 February 2017

Christopher Stephens

That this House is concerned by the Government's proposed closure of almost 100 Ministry of Defence sites across the UK; notes the detrimental impact these closures will have on civilian and military staff and their families; further notes the socio-economic impact on local communities; is further concerned by the lack of consultation with representatives of civilian staff or community leaders; is aware a detailed financial assessment has not been made of the cost linked to closing sites and preparing them for resale, including decontamination works; notes that the Government has failed to carry out a site-by-site socio-economic impact assessment; and calls on the Government to delay closure of these sites to allow time for full consideration regarding the future of the defence estate with local community leaders, military and civilian staff.

6. Further reading

Library Briefing Papers

[UK Defence Expenditure](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8175
21 December 2017

[Modernising the Army's armoured vehicles](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8186
20 December 2017

[EU Defence: the realisation of Permanent Structured Cooperation \(PESCO\)](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8149
12 December 2017

[The cost of the UK's strategic nuclear deterrent](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8166
8 December 2017

[Defence employment \(UK\): Social Indicators page](#)

Commons Briefing Paper SN02621
27 November 2017

[UK Defence Personnel Statistics](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7930
21 November 2017

[The Armed Forces \(Flexible Working\) Bill 2017-19](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8124
16 November 2017

[The defence capability review: equipment](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8112
17 October 2017

[Nuclear Weapons - Country Comparisons](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7566
9 October 2017

[Replacing the UK's Nuclear Deterrent: Progress of the Dreadnought Class](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8010
19 June 2017

[Armed Forces Housing](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7985
15 June 2017

[Defence Estate Strategy](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7862
12 January 2017

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