

£265 million missile upgrade for UK submarines

- UK to make upgrades to current stock of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles
- Enhanced long-range strike capability of up to 1,000 miles

The UK's stock of Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAM) will be upgraded on Royal Navy submarines to ensure the weapon is even more effective against future threats.

In a £265 million contract with the US Government, with maintenance and technical support at the UK sites of BAE Systems, Babcock International and Lockheed Martin, the Royal Navy's Astute-Class submarines will be armed with an enhanced Block V standard missile, capable of striking severe threats at a range of up to 1,000 miles.

The upgraded missile will be able to travel further than the previous Block IV iteration, maintaining a precision-strike capability that is unmatched in range and accuracy. The upgrade will also make the weapon less vulnerable to external threats, with modernised in-flight communication and target selection.

At approximately 5.6m long and weighing 2200kg – a similar weight to a 4x4 car – the high sub-sonic Tomahawk was first introduced into UK service in 1998 and can hit in-land targets from the sea within minutes. A weapon of choice since then, it has been successfully deployed during operations in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said:

This upgrade will equip our Astute-Class attack submarines with the one of the most lethal and precise long-range strike weapons.

Enhancing this cutting-edge missile system will ensure the UK can strike severe threats up to 1,000 miles away.

The Tomahawk missiles will be upgraded as part of a Foreign Military Sale with the US Government, which was negotiated by the MOD's procurement arm, Defence Equipment and Support and will be active from July.

Making use of existing US research and expertise on the upgraded missile, the contract will mean the UK continues to receive full access to the US Tomahawk programme, support package and upgrades.

DE&S Director Weapons, Ed Cutts, said:

Not only will this FMS sustain and improve a proven, crucial

operational capability for any future conflicts, it will continue to ensure interoperability with our US allies and the follow-on support arrangements will sustain jobs for UK industry.

As Block IV is upgraded to Block V from 2024, it will modernise and improve in-flight communications and navigation, making the missile more effective against future threats around the globe.

The Foreign Military Sale also includes missile maintenance, recertification of existing missiles, spares, operational flight testing, software, hardware and training provisions.

Director Submarines, Rear Admiral Simon Asquith said:

The Tomahawk Land Attack Cruise Missile is a cutting-edge system which provides the UK with real strategic and operational choice. Able to be fired from a stealthy UK nuclear attack submarine, the system's exceptional range, accuracy and survivability provides the UK, alongside our US Allies, with a world beating precision strike capability.

The announcement builds on commitments made in the [Defence Command Paper](#) and [Integrated Review](#), in addition to Royal Navy mission planning and weapon control system upgrades that will improve the performance of legacy Block IV missiles.

Due to be operational in the mid-2020s, the upgraded Tomahawk will align with the delivery of the latest Astute submarines.