News story: £1.4 billion deal for Royal Navy’s new attack submarine

The submarine, named Agamemnon, is part of the Astute Class, the largest, most advanced and most powerful attack submarines ever to enter service with the Royal Navy. The submarines are being built by BAE Systems in Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, which employs around 8,000 people in its Submarines business, with thousands more working in the UK submarine supply chain.

The new contract guarantees a better deal for the UK taxpayer and for the Armed Forces, with an incentivised contract arrangement that will help to save money and demands the best possible work from industry.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

> This latest investment means we are well on our way to completing our fleet of Astute submarines. These are the most advanced submarines ever operated by the Royal Navy and are already providing unprecedented levels of stealth and attack capability across the world.
>
> Backed by a rising defence budget and a £178 billion equipment plan, Barrow will remain the hub of our submarine build programmes providing high skilled jobs for years to come.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon with BAE Systems apprentices inside Devonshire Dock Hall where HMS Agamemnon is under construction. Picture: Michael Vallance, BAE Systems.

Construction of the 7,400 tonne, 97-metre long Agamemnon began in 2012, and is well underway in the Devonshire Dock Hall at Barrow, alongside Boat 5 – Anson – and the yet-to-be-named Boat 7. Their sister submarines, HMS Astute, Ambush and Artful are already in service with the Royal Navy, contributing to operations around the globe.

Rear Admiral Paul Methven, Director Submarines Acquisition for the Submarine Delivery Agency, said:

> The signature of this contract secures another world-class nuclear submarine for the Royal Navy. These are the most technologically advanced submarines we have ever operated, offering much greater firepower, better communications and more advanced stealth technology than their predecessors.
>
> Today marks another significant milestone for the Astute programme, that demonstrates the UK’s ability to deliver complex engineering

> projects, providing a fleet of submarines which will protect the UK’s interests around the globe.

Featuring the latest nuclear-powered technology, the Astute Class submarines can circumnavigate the world submerged, manufacturing the crew’s oxygen from seawater as they go. They also have the ability to operate covertly and remain undetected in almost all circumstances despite being 50 per cent bigger than the Royal Navy’s current Trafalgar Class submarines which are being replaced by the Astute Class.

Will Blamey, Managing Director of BAE Systems Submarines, said:

> Securing the contract for the sixth Astute class submarine is a significant milestone for BAE Systems and the result of many years of hard work by our highly skilled workforce. The Astute class submarines are amongst the most highly capable and technologically advanced in the world and we’re immensely proud to build them for the Royal Navy.

Alongside work on the Astute Class, BAE Systems is also the industrial lead for the Dreadnought programme, the Royal Navy’s next generation of nuclear deterrent submarines.

Press release: UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue

The third meeting of the biannual UK-Sudan Strategic Dialogue was hosted by the Government of Sudan in Khartoum on 29th March 2017, co-chaired by Undersecretary Abdulghani Al Naim, from the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Sudan, and Neil Wigan, Director for Africa at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, accompanied by delegations from both countries.

The meetings covered bilateral issues, culture, the peace process, human rights, development, trade and investment, migration, defence engagement, counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, and regional issues.

Both sides welcomed the steps taken since the last Strategic Dialogue meeting in London and agreed to continue their joint work over the coming months. They welcomed the visit to Sudan of the Permanent Undersecretaries of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Department for International Development, and a recent visit by a trade delegation from Sudan to the UK, as well as recent agreements on increasing cultural co-operation.

Both parties discussed recent political developments and the peace process in Darfur and the Two Areas. The United Kingdom welcomed the recent HAC directives to improve humanitarian access to Darfur and the Two Areas, in particular the decision to open a humanitarian corridor into South Sudan. Both sides agreed to continue the regular dialogue on human rights between the two governments at all levels, including on the subject of trafficking in people.

The UK provided briefing on recent political developments in the UK, including its decision to leave the European Union and the way forward after triggering Article 50 of Lisbon Treaty.

Both sides also affirmed their strong commitment to continuing to cooperate on education and the importance of cultural exchanges. These continue to be an important opportunity to build on our shared history and values, and engage the next generation. Both sides exchanged views on recent political developments in the region, including Libya and South Sudan, and agreed to continue an open dialogue on these issues. Both sides expressed strong concern about the current situation in South Sudan, and agreed on the importance of providing humanitarian assistance to those in need in the South, as well as supporting Sudan’s efforts in receiving South Sudanese refugees.

The two parties also agreed to continue working together on countering terrorism and violent extremism. They welcomed the recent exchanges of visits to share expertise and agreed to continue and broaden these exchanges in future.

The UK and Sudan reaffirmed the importance of continued progress towards our joint goals, and a continued broadening of the bilateral relationship, and agreed to hold another Strategic Dialogue in London in six months’ time.

News story: UK to be main delivery partner of Lima 2019 Pan American Games

Introduction

International Trade Minister Greg Hands today signed an arrangement with the organisers of the 2019 Pan-American Games, making the UK the lead partner in helping deliver the fourth largest sporting event in the world, providing expertise from managing events like London 2012.

The games, hosted in Peru for the first time in Lima in 2019, will bring together the nations of North and South America, with over 5,000 competitors in 36 different sports. As part of the agreement, a team of UK experts with experience running over 100 major sporting events including the 2012 Olympics will work closely with the Lima 2019 organising committee, helping it deliver the infrastructure and organisation of the games on-time and on-budget.

Contracts worth hundreds of millions of pounds will be open to UK companies to help deliver the organisation of the games in areas like event management, security and construction where the UK is a world-leader having been involved in the organisation of every major international sporting event since the 2000 Olympics.

Joint Statement from the UK and Peru governments

(Lima, Peru – 19 April 2017) The Peruvian government, through its 'Special Project for the Planning and Development of the Lima 2019 Games', and the UK's Department for International Trade, have arranged for Peru to receive UK support and knowledge-transfer in order to successfully organise and deliver the Lima 2019 Pan American and Parapan American Games. The arrangement will cover the entire duration of the project until the closing of the Lima 2019 Games.

The bilateral arrangement was signed within an international cooperation framework which will enable Peru to carry out a successful edition of the Pan American Games and leave a lasting economic, social, urban, and sporting legacy.

The UK has proven experience in organising and delivering successful global sport events whilst leaving a positive legacy for host cities and countries.

Carlos Neuhaus, President of the Lima 2019 organising committee, said:

> This arrangement with the UK government is fundamental to our progress in successfully organising and delivering the Lima 2019 Games. We are thrilled to be working in close collaboration with our British partners, benefitting from their extensive expertise to make the Lima 2019 Games a success.

Greg Hands, Minister of State in the Department for International Trade, said:

> Since the Sydney Games in 2000 the UK has been involved in every major global sporting tournament offering support in areas like construction, transport and event organisation. This new agreement will deliver that world-leading expertise to help make the Lima 2019 Games a success, creating opportunities for UK companies and a lasting legacy for the Peruvian people as we did at London 2012.

British Ambassador to Peru, Anwar Choudhury, added:

> This is a significant new milestone for our 2 countries. We are in this together, as friends and as long-standing partners. Through our support and expertise, we are confident we can make the Lima 2019 Games a tremendous success and leave a lasting legacy for Peru, just as the 2012 Olympic Games did in London.

Knowledge transfer is also part of the bilateral arrangement. The team of British experts has an accumulated experience of over 100 large sporting events, including the 2012 Olympic Games in London, to help the Special Project ensure effective time-management and quality delivery of the Lima 2019 Pan American Games.

Press release: Enhancing economic relationships between the UK-GCC through PPP

In the first event of its kind with the Gulf, International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox today opened the UK-GCC Public Private Partnership (PPP) conference to show how UK expertise can maximise the innovation of both public and private sectors to transform their societies.

The conference will bring together ministers and senior representatives from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states, led by H.E Dr Abdulatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Secretary-General of the GCC, to look at how PPPs can be used to inform national diversification plans.

From the Qatar National Vision to Saudi Vision 2030, the Gulf is looking for opportunities to diversify and shape their economies to face the challenges of the future, from infrastructure to healthcare and education.

The UK has considerable experience in the area of public private partnerships, which enable the public sector to access the discipline, skills and expertise of the private sector, and for many years has been home to one of the world’s largest and most experienced PPP markets. UK companies with a proven track record across a range of sectors will share their expertise at the conference.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

> The UK consistently shows how collaboration with the private sector can lead to innovation in public sector services. Today’s conference is not only an opportunity for the GCC nations to capitalise on our extensive knowledge and experience in this area,

> but is also a springboard for our growing future trading relationship.
>
> The UK and Gulf states share a strong and growing trade and investment relationship, and the connections that are made today between government and business will help to shape a better future for all our nations.

H.E. Dr. Abdel Aziz bin Hamad Aluwaisheg added:

> The conference is focused on the implementation of the GCC-UK 2016 Summit and the Joint Action Plan agreed between the GCC and the United Kingdom on increasing opportunities for investment between the 2 sides.
>
> The conference also presents the national transformation programs, and the economic diversification plans adopted by the GCC. It also presents the laws enacted by the GCC countries to increase opportunities for foreign investors in the sectors of infrastructure, health, telecommunications, energy, information technology and other sectors. This is in pursuit of strengthening their economies and diversifying their resources.

The conference will also provide a further opportunity to expand and deepen the trading relationship between the UK and the GCC. UK companies export over £30 billion worth of goods and services to the GCC nations every year and thousands of British companies are active across the Gulf, creating jobs and helping to deliver projects from energy expansion, to helping Qatar prepare to host the 2022 World Cup.

Like countries within the GCC – the UK government is embarking upon a bold industrial strategy, taking the big investment decisions required on capital projects to stimulate our economy and project our prosperity far into the future.

Our infrastructure plans include over £300 billion worth of investment by 2020 to 2021, over 50% of which will be financed and delivered by the private sector, both domestic and international.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) is also offering practical support to expand the UK-GCC relationship. Through UK Export Finance, we can provide up to £30 billion in support for UK companies exporting globally, and for their buyers in both the public and private sectors.

In addition, UK Export Finance support will now be available in all of the GCC’s currencies, allowing the region’s buyers to access finance in their own currency and making the UK’s world-leading goods and services even more competitive.

Speech: Unlocking the full potential of the UK-GCC trade and investment relationship

Secretary General, Your Excellencies, Lords, Ladies and gentlemen.

Good morning. It gives me great pleasure to be here today to open the UK-GCC Public Private Partnership Conference and to welcome especially those who have travelled.

The conference is a celebration of the strong partnership already enjoyed by the United Kingdom and the nations of the GCC.

It is a partnership based not only upon defence and mutual security interests, but upon trade, commerce, and the bonds of friendship that span the geographic separation between Britain and the Gulf.

But it is not a time to rest on our laurels. Both the UK and the GCC nations stand on the verge of a bright, outward-looking future, where co-operation with international partners will be more important than ever before.

From the Qatar National Vision to Saudi Vision 2030, every country here today is embarking on an ambitious journey, enacting great transformations to safeguard prosperity, and ensure that every citizen has a stake in the future.

Britain too has a bold vision for the future.

When the Prime Minister formed her government in July last year, she made clear her ambition to build a global britain, a country that is internationalist, open and outward-looking.

A Britain that will work with old friends and new allies across the globe to liberalise commerce, stimulate trade, and promote political stability.

My own Department for International Trade was created to help realise this vision, working to boost British exports, attract yet more foreign investment, and champion trading freedoms in the UK and across the world.

Our departure from the European Union will give the UK, for the first time in a generation, the tools to realise this ambition.

Of course, our European partners will always remain our close economic and political friends. The triggering of Article 50 marks the start of a new and deep partnership with the EU.

But the UK will also look beyond the borders of our continent, strengthening our trading ties with those nations, like the GCC states, who have long been our diplomatic and commercial allies.

Our trading relationship is about more than macroeconomic benefits. It is about shaping our economies to face the challenges of the future. It is about investing in infrastructure, healthcare and education. It is about creating the jobs that offer financial security to millions of our citizens.

Fortunately, the relationship between the UK and the Gulf states is starting from a position of great strength.

We have long been partners in defence. During the Cold War and in the decades since, the UK has been at the forefront of the security relationship between the Gulf States and the West, an alliance that time and time again has faced down regional and global threats.

The new Strategic Partnership between the UK and the GCC, announced when the Prime Minister attended the Council in December last year, will serve to strengthen these ties at a time of increasing global uncertainty. We each need to do our part, across the whole of government to ensure that this mission continues to grow and flourish.

In recent years, though, it is our economic and commercial relationship that has become the standout success story.

UK companies export over £30 billion worth of goods and services to the GCC nations every year, more than to China, and almost twice the value of our exports to India.

Thousands of British companies are active across the Gulf, creating jobs and helping to deliver projects from energy expansion to helping Qatar prepare to host the 2022 World Cup.

And the relationship is far from one-way. The Gulf is home to the world's largest wealth funds, and your investment has poured into the United Kingdom, transforming the fabric of our nation through scores of high-visibility development projects.

At a time when Britain is recasting its place in the world, GCC investment has been a great public vote of confidence in the intrinsic strength of the UK economy.

Yet for all this success, there remain a vast number of untapped opportunities to expand and deepen out trading relationship. There is much potential yet to unlock.

This conference is part of the drumbeat of the UK's wider engagement with the GCC. Our partnership is already flourishing, but we can be closer, on defence, on security, on culture, and of course on trade and investment.

Following the creation of the Department for International Trade, one of the first official visits as Secretary of State was to the Gulf.

This has set the pattern of engagement, with ministerial visits across the region, as well as high-level seminars and conferences in several countries.

Like our counterparts across the GCC, the UK government is embarking upon a bold industrial strategy, taking the big investment decisions required on capital projects to stimulate our economy and project our prosperity far into the future.

Our infrastructure plans include over £300 billion worth of investment by 2020 / 2021, over 50% of which will be financed and delivered by the private sector.

The UK has always had a strong reputation for innovative approaches to infrastructure financing, and for many years this country has been home to one of the world's largest and most experienced private public partnership markets.

Public private partnerships and private finance initiatives are not always a magic bullet, but they do work remarkably well to transfer the risk of capital projects, spreading the load between the government and their private sector partners.

They ensure that the private sector is free to bring its innovation and dynamism into public services and government projects, working in an appropriate partnership to realise national ambitions.

Governments, however, must be vigilant. If PPPs or other funding mechanism are carried out incorrectly, then the taxpayer can be locked into a significant burden.

The last Labour government, for example, have left the NHS hospitals owing over £80 billion in PFI loan unitary charges, leaving the taxpayer a legacy of debt repayment that will amount to up to 7 times the original capital cost.

Yet with care such risks are easily mitigated, and PPPs and PFIs have had a truly transformative effect on the UK's infrastructure and public services.

As of last month, there were 716 ongoing PPP and PFI projects in the UK, stretching across education, healthcare, housing and transport.

Across the country, the government and private enterprise are working side by side to build a better future for our citizens.

Today's conference will enable the countries of the GCC to tap into the UK's wealth of PPP and PFI expertise, helping you to finance and deliver your ambitious national visions.

It could be said that knowledge and expertise are some of the UK's chief exports. This applies not only to initiatives such as PPP, but to the companies the length and breadth of Britain who stand ready to help realise the GCC's ambitions.

From infrastructure to healthcare to education, UK companies with a proven track record are ready to share their expertise and invest in the future of the Gulf. Their capability can give your nations, and your citizens, the tools to face the economic and social challenges of the 21st Century.

The connections that are made today between government and business will help to shape a better future for all our nations.

Great strides have also been made at governmental level.

I am delighted that the inaugural Joint Economic and Trade Commission with Qatar will take place in London next month, and I look forward to co-chairing the Joint Ministerial Commission with Saudi Arabia in the near future.

The UK's trade working group with the GCC has been established, and will soon start work on the future shape of our trading relationship, identifying barriers to trade and forging an ever-closer commercial relationship between the UK and the GCC.

Three Prime Ministerial Trade Envoys are currently active within the GCC, spearheading a whole-of-government effort to maximise Britain's trade and investment opportunities.

As well as this political and diplomatic progress, my own Department for International Trade is offering practical support to expand the UK-GCC trading relationship.

We believe that no trade between the UK and our partners in the Gulf should fail for lack of finance and insurance. That is why, through UK Export Finance, we can give buyers and project sponsors across the region attractive long-term finance to make sourcing from the UK more competitive.

We can provide billions in support for UK companies exporting to countries in the GCC, and for their buyers in the region in both the public and private sectors.

In addition UK Export Finance support will now be available in a number of the GCC's currencies, allowing the region's buyers to access finance in their own currency and making the UK's world-leading goods and services even more competitive.

At every level, from the highest reaches of government to individual businesses, we are striving to deepen the trading relationship between the UK and the GCC.

This conference is not only an opportunity for the GCC nations to capitalise on the UK's vast PPP knowledge and experience. It is also a springboard for our future trading relationship.

As the UK recasts its place in the world, our friendship with the GCC nations will become ever more important, as we work together to shape the future, realising our national visions and building a safer, more prosperous world for all our people.

The UK-GCC partnership is strong, and it will only grow stronger. When the drive and dynamism of the Gulf States meets the knowledge and expertise of the United Kingdom, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

Thank you, and welcome to the conference.