

News story: HMS Sutherland to deploy to Asia Pacific, Defence Secretary announces on-board

Addressing the crew on HMS Sutherland this morning, the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced that the ship will leave Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Devonport in the New Year to represent UK interests across the Indian Ocean and into the Pacific.

In a period of ongoing tension in the Korean peninsula, the Type 23 Frigate will be available to work closely with our regional partners, including US, Japanese and South Korean, and participate in joint training and exercises.

This follows an announcement made by the Prime Minister that HMS Argyll will deploy to Japan to take part in exercises in December 2018 following participation in a Five Power Defence Arrangements exercise with Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia earlier in the year.

Speaking during a visit to the Devonport Naval Base, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Our already strong defence ties with allies in the Asia Pacific area will be deepened further by this deployment.

At a time when North Korea's illegal weapons programme is causing global concern, the deployment of these two Royal Navy ships is a clear demonstration of the UK's commitment to the peace and prosperity of the region.

As well as addressing the crew of the ship during his visit to the Naval Base, the Defence Secretary watched operational sea training on board another Type 23 frigate, HMS Westminster, met with staff and saw facilities at the Submarine Support complex.