

News story: Joint statement: India-UK Defence Partnership

Updated: added Location

Minister of Defence Shri Arun Jaitley and Secretary of State for Defence Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon MP set out a shared vision for the India-UK Defence Partnership.

At the invitation of Minister of Defence Shri Arun Jaitley, the Secretary of State for Defence Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon MP visited India for the India-UK Strategic Defence Dialogue during 11-14 April 2017. The visit reaffirmed and consolidated UK-India defence cooperation in the framework of the Defence and International Security Partnership, agreed in November 2015, and the subsequent Joint Statement between the governments of India and the UK in November 2016.

This enduring defence partnership will encompass not only cooperation in defence industry but also stronger military to military engagement, including training and advanced joint exercises.

The renewed engagement will place capability and technology development at its core and seek to harness the complementary strengths of both nations in defence manufacturing and use the combined strengths of their respective private and public sectors to develop defence solutions for use in both home and shared export markets.

The Defence Ministers will also continue to consult and co-ordinate policies across a range of global security challenges, especially those intended to eliminate the scourge of international terrorism, in pursuit of their shared goal of a more secure world.

An Enhanced Defence Partnership

Based on the Defence and International Security Partnership (DISP) and building on existing Defence Consultative Group (DCG) mechanisms, both sides will explore additional areas for institutional engagement.

The Ministers agreed to further strengthen their naval and maritime interactions, including enhanced Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) through the bilateral technical agreement to exchange information to track terrorist and pirate vessels, a key deliverable of the DISP. The two Ministers also agreed to further develop cooperation between the UK Hydrographic Office and the Indian Navy Hydrographic Office.

India and the UK will endeavour to build a range of Capability Partnerships focussing on varied aspects of military effectiveness such as specialised training interactions and exchange of best practices in the following areas:

Counter Terrorism (CT), Counter Improvised Explosive Devices (CIED), Air Force Training, Air Total Safety, Aircraft Carriers, Maritime Safety, Shipbuilding and UN Peacekeeping. Efforts are already underway with exchanges of subject matter experts to discuss air safety collaboration and future CT requirements. The Ministers tasked the relevant Executive Steering Groups (ESGs) to finalise proposals for consideration at the next DCG meeting scheduled later this year.

As India and UK continue to transform and modernise their defence structures with a shared desire to maximise the efficiencies and operational benefits of establishing joint force structures, the two Ministers agreed to sharing relevant experience in this domain.

Defence Industry

Whilst acknowledging the progress being made, the two Ministers recognised the potential for further cooperation in defence manufacturing between UK and Indian companies under the 'Make in India' framework.

Minister Jaitley welcomed the UK's interest in manufacturing in India as evidenced through recent announcements including the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between Bharat Dynamics Ltd and Thales UK on technology transfer opportunities for missile systems and efforts to develop an Advanced Hawk jet trainer jointly by the BAE Systems and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

To further encourage and facilitate cooperation between UK and Indian companies, the two Ministers agreed to extend the current Defence Equipment Cooperation MOU and work towards early completion of an expanded MOU that will provide a platform for UK and Indian industries to collaborate on and support transfer of technology on projects in areas of mutual interest.

The two Ministers welcomed measures to ensure life cycle support and sustenance of UK-origin defence platforms used by India, which may include setting up joint ventures and other collaborative arrangements.

The UK and India will encourage interactions between the Indian Army Design Bureau and Defence Equipment and Support (DE&S)/Army Capability Branch through their Defence Equipment Sub-Group.

The UK and India will explore establishing a secure communications method in order to share classified material. The two countries will also consider upgrading their bilateral General Security Arrangement.

Science and Technology

The two Ministers recognised the need for stronger R&D cooperation, including access to defence R&D training, to enable new and vibrant technology partnerships across the defence domain.

They noted recent progress made on Defence Science and Technology collaboration with the signing of the Phase 2 follow-on research Collaborative Project agreement on Human Sciences, signed at Aero India 2017.

Conclusion

The above commitments will better enable the UK and India to meet the evolving threats and challenges that face democracies in the 21st century. Both countries recognised their shared perspectives on the regional and international security situation and agreed to maintain their close interaction in this regard.

Secretary of State for Defence Rt Hon Sir Michael Fallon MP thanked Minister of Defence Shri Arun Jaitley for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation and looked forward to a return visit by the Minister of Defence to the UK.