

News story: UK Defence Chief appointed as NATO Chairman of Military Committee

UK Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach has been elected as the new NATO Chairman of the Military Committee, the Alliance's senior military officer.

Following a lengthy election campaign, last night Sir Stuart was elected by other NATO Chiefs of Defence. It is anticipated that CDS will take over the role in June 2018.

Becoming the first Briton to hold the position for 25 years, this appointment will see Sir Stuart as NATO's senior military officer and act as the principal military advisor to the Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

CDS Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach said:

It is a huge honour to have been chosen to be the next Chairman of the Military Committee, one of the most important positions in NATO, central to European security.

I am excited to take on this next challenge at such an important time for NATO, at a time when the alliance must modernise to face new and ever adapting threats. Having spent the last year in the hugely rewarding position as Head of the UK's Armed Forces, I know I am ready to take on this challenge.

I would like to personally thank all of those who supported me through this campaign and voted for me in the election.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

That Air Chief Marshal Peach has been elected to this position by his fellow Chiefs of Defence across NATO underlines the esteem in which he is held by his peers.

No-one understands better the challenges that NATO faces and I am sure that he will serve the Alliance with the same professionalism and rigour with which he has furthered Britain's interests throughout his distinguished career.

While Sir Stuart's appointment is testament to his ability and achievements, it is also a demonstration of the leading role that the UK plays in NATO and the importance of the Alliance to the UK.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I would like to congratulate Chief of the Defence Staff Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach, who has deservedly been appointed as the next Chairman of NATO's Military Committee.

Sir Stuart has been an exceptional Chief of Defence Staff, unwavering in his dedication and commitment to the UK's Armed Forces.

NATO is vital to Britain's security at a time of increasing threats across the globe. This appointment underlines our leadership role in NATO and I know Sir Stuart will relish these new challenges.

Outgoing Chairman of the Military Committee General Petr Pavel said:

I welcome the election of CDS Air Chief Marshal Sir Stuart Peach. I have no doubt his vast experience as Chief of Defence but also as a Military Committee member, will allow him to chair the Committee with great aptitude, ensuring the North Atlantic Council continues to receive sound and unfettered military advice from the Military Committee to guide their work. I wish him the best of luck in his future position.

Sir Stuart has been in the role of CDS since July 2016 part of his long and successful military career after joining the RAF in 1977. Highlights of his career include commanding the UK's intervention in Libya in 2011 and becoming the first Commander of UK Joint Forces in December that same year.

The appointment of CDS will reassure NATO allies across Europe in the face of an increasingly assertive Russia. The UK has been standing by allies in the region, leading an Enhanced Forward Presence battlegroup in Estonia and contributing troops in Poland, contributing to NATO Maritime Groups, committing Typhoons to Air Policing Missions in Romania, and training thousands of Armed Forces in Ukraine.

CDS will take over from General Petr Pavel, of the Czech Republic, who has been in the role since 2015.