

Press release: Defence is important for Welsh prosperity, independent review concludes

Former Defence Minister Philip Dunne has today released a wide-ranging report which highlights the integral role of defence to British prosperity.

- It says defence invests £945 million in Welsh industry
- Wales benefits from MOD expenditure of £300 per person each year
- Defence supports over 6,000 industry jobs

The review was commissioned by the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson after he launched the Modernising Defence Programme (MDP) to strengthen the Armed Forces in the face of intensifying threats, alongside the Prime Minister and the Chancellor.

The independent review of defence's contribution to national economic and social value by Philip Dunne looks right across the Armed Forces and industry to provide an in-depth picture to inform proposals for reform into the MDP.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Philip Dunne's review shows how vital defence is, not only protecting us from global dangers and safeguarding our national prosperity, but also to our economy by creating thousands of specialist and highly-skilled jobs and creating billions in exports.

He paints a clear picture of how defence and defence industry reaches every corner of the UK and is central to employment in so many cities and towns.

He lays down some key challenges to consider as our Modernising Defence Programme continues to ensure defence is the best it can be in a post-Brexit Britain.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Today's review shows the valuable impact of the defence sector both to our security, but also to the Welsh economy, supporting thousands of jobs and millions of pounds of investment across the country.

Last month's Armed Forces Day in Llandudno was a proud display of Wales' military association, and I've witnessed first hand the incredible spirit of our Welsh Guards on the ground in Afghanistan.

The UK Government is working hard to ensure that defence continues to play a crucial part in the fabric of Wales' communities and national economy.

The report also includes a number of recommendations for review, including: further research into the impact of significant procurements on national prosperity; building on the strong relationships with industry suppliers; and considering how the UK's world-leading institutions could be given greater entrepreneurial freedoms.

Wales plays an important role in UK Defence providing over 3,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces, supporting over 6,000 industry jobs and is renowned for its vast training areas which enable the British Army and RAF to perfect their skills to ensure they maintain their military edge over adversaries.

The country benefits from MOD expenditure of £300 per person each year and a huge investment in local industry and commerce of £945 million. The largest MOD industry group expenditure in the nation is with weapons and ammunition totalling £246 million. Key suppliers include Airbus, General Dynamics, GE Aviation, QinetiQ and Raytheon

Wales features some of the most important national defence infrastructure by creating future Army leaders at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon, securing the UK's reputation as a leading global air power with its fast jet pilot training at RAF Valley and of course, the pride of having the second of the Royal Navy's cutting-edge aircraft carriers named HMS Prince of Wales.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

Wales has a proud and historic relationship with our Armed Forces which is clearly demonstrated in the Dunne Review. For centuries, the Welsh have supplied cutting-edge military hardware, world-leading training facilities and some of the finest men and women in our military. I want to see every single aspect of Wales' contribution to Defence expand and develop in the coming years to the benefit of our Armed Forces and our nation.

Philip Dunne said:

I am pleased to have been able to undertake this review and am grateful for the help of all those in and outside the Department who have contributed.

This is the first time for some years that an independent report has sought to look at the whole impact of Defence on the UK economy, its devolved nations and regions in England.

Defence has made a number of important steps in meeting its

prosperity objective. It makes a major contribution to our economic well-being, with 500,000 people working directly and indirectly in Defence and over 25,500 apprentices developing skills. In several local communities Defence is one of the leading providers of high skilled jobs.

But there is more that can be done as Defence has to adapt to rapidly evolving technological threats, so too should it seize the opportunities to adapt and improve its own processes to help meet the challenges of the high-tech defence future.

I look forward to seeing how the MOD responds to this report and have confirmed to the Defence Secretary that I am willing to revisit in some months' time how the Department has considered and where it has decided to implement these ideas.

Defence makes a huge contribution across all regions of the UK whether as a major employer, a large investor or as a hub for local communities. Defence is the third largest landowner in the country with 220,000 hectares often benefiting remote and rural communities.

The report reveals that around 500,000 people support defence across the UK. It outlines that the UK's defence industry is one of the world's strongest with an annual turnover of £22 billion supporting 260,000 jobs, many of which are highly skilled and well-paid. Most importantly, he acknowledges that defence is a major contributor to the nation's skills and one of the largest employer of apprentices with over 25,500 currently enrolled.

Dunne also acknowledges that, in addition to the MOD budget of almost £37 billion, defence's direct contribution to GDP features over £7 billion of exports generated each year on average. Just recently a shipbuilding contract worth up to £20 billion was signed between BAE Systems and the Australian government for British-designed Type 26 frigates – the biggest Naval defence contract for a decade.

Defence's relationship as a customer and industrial partner with many high growth sectors in the economy generates more activity, particularly in the aerospace, space, cyber, and increasingly the knowledge economy and creative sectors.

Defence is also driving investment in British industry through the National Shipbuilding Strategy, which was launched last year to transform the UK maritime industry and boost the prosperity of regions, shipyards and maritime supply chains across the country. The MOD is also set to launch a Combat Air Strategy to ensure Britain maintains a world-leading combat air capability.

The MOD will now consider the findings of Philip Dunne's report as work continues on the MDP.

ENDS

Press release: Home Secretary's statement on the death of Dawn Sturgess

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The death of Dawn Sturgess is shocking and tragic news and I want to express my sincere condolences to her family and friends. This has now become a murder investigation and police and security officials are working around the clock to establish the full facts of the incident.

This desperately sad news only strengthens our resolve to find out exactly what has happened.

As I said earlier today when I visited Amesbury and Salisbury, the Government will continue to provide the local community all the support it needs.

News story: Home Secretary visits the site of major incident in Amesbury

The visit came after tests showed the couple were exposed to the same Novichok nerve agent used in the attack on Yulia and Sergei Skripal in Salisbury in March.

The Home Secretary was met by Chief Constable of Wiltshire Police Kier Pritchard at the Guildhall in Salisbury, where he was given an operational update on the ongoing investigation. Afterwards, he met with first responders from Wiltshire Police and the Fire and Rescue and ambulance services to thank them for their dedication and professionalism.

John Glen, MP for Salisbury, then took the Home Secretary to visit local businesses in Guildhall Square, and to watch a performance by the Salisbury Area Young Musicians.

Then the Home Secretary went to Amesbury where he visited Muggleton Road, the site where the two individuals were taken ill.

Speaking at the scene, he said:

It was a privilege to meet some of the first responders and I want to thank them for their professionalism and dedication. We now need to allow the police to continue their investigation.

I am mindful of the individuals still in hospital in critical care and thinking of them, and their family and friends. It is important to reiterate though that the risk to the general public remains low.

What I have experienced in Amesbury and Salisbury is an overwhelming feeling of the community coming together. They have impressed the whole country with their response and have shown that Salisbury is open for business.

[Speech: Reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy](#)

Mr President, I'd like to begin by aligning the United Kingdom with the statement to be delivered by the European Union. And I'd like to thank the Ambassadors of Finland and Jordan and their experts for their tireless efforts over the past month. The United Kingdom is pleased that we, the Member States of the UN General Assembly, have achieved international consensus while reviewing the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. It is important that as the global terrorism threat evolves the strategy reflects the progress that we Member States have made and continues to build on it. The journey to reaching consensus has been fraught with contentious debate. It has not been easy but it is important that in this forum, we all have an opportunity to share our views and perspectives but we come together in the end to face a common and global threat.

The UK is particularly pleased to see the reaffirmation of the importance of preventing violent extremism and of addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism. Prevention is a core component of our counter-terrorism approach and we see an important role for the United Nations in furthering national and international efforts in this regard. For the United Kingdom, preventing violent extremism is fundamentally about safeguarding people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism by reducing their intent to act. The UK champions a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to prevention which is reflected in the UK's newly refreshed CT

strategy CONTEST.

We recognise that national and local buy-in for programming and measures are critical ingredients for effectiveness and sustainability. Preventing violent extremism must be owned by a state national or local authorities. It cannot be imposed from the outside. That would be wrong. It would be ineffective. So let us end our disagreement over labels and get on with action.

Mr President, as the global threat from terrorism evolves and spans across political borders, the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and those returning or relocating from conflict zones is of serious concern to many of us and we were pleased to see that international commitments to address this, including through tools such as API and PNR are reflected in the Resolution. We recognise that many states have called for technical assistance in meeting these obligations and we support the efforts of the United Nations system and partners to provide the requested technical assistance. But we would also stress that Member States have the responsibility to meet all obligations under Security Council Resolutions including 2396 and 2309.

We welcome the strengthened cooperation between the Office for Counter-Terrorism and the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate as embodied by Under Secretary-General Voronkov and Assistant Secretary-General Coninx and we welcome their joint report which we shared with all Member States. The unique assessments and analyses provided by CTED provide an important basis for the capacity building support provided by the Global Compact entities.

These recommendations reflect the prioritisation and approval of the Member State and the support of the Council through the Counter-Terrorism Committee. The UK is therefore keen that the General Assembly bodies work closely with those of the Security Council to ensure that the UN counter-terrorism architecture remains fit for purpose and positioned to respond in a rapidly evolving threat landscape.

Mr President, conversations between Member States will, and rightfully should, continue in the month to come to build on what we have achieved during the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review and to discuss frankly and openly those topics on which we may disagree. The UK wants to move forwards. As we look ahead to the high level conference this week, we hope it will provide an opportunity for constructive exchange and insight. The UK hopes that through the full contribution and involvement of both government and civil society organisations, we, the international community, can build on the consensus achieved on the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review in order to make progress as a unified voice in our fight against global terrorism. Because that fight is too important for us to be divided. That is the goal of the terrorists. So let us stand together.

Thank you, Mr President.

News story: Game changing progress in Sellafield pond

For the first time ever, empty nuclear fuel skips have been removed from the floor of the First Generation Magnox Storage Pond – one of the most hazardous facilities in Europe.

The breakthrough came after Sellafield Ltd worked with Appleby-based engineering firm Barrnon to make containers to safely store the skips elsewhere on the site.

A Sellafield Ltd team worked with Barrnon to add extra shielding and wooden braces to 50 shipping containers, enabling an initial 100 skips to be removed from the pond.

The approach applies learning from skip operations at other nuclear sites in the UK.

More than 1,200 Magnox skips rest on the floor of the pond, which was originally used to store nuclear fuel for atomic weapons.

Clearing them out makes it much easier to remove other hazards like sludge, a by-product formed from decaying nuclear fuel, algae, and other debris.

Dorothy Gradden, head of legacy ponds at Sellafield, said:

This is a game changer for us and the most significant step yet in getting clutter out of the pond.

It gives us the elbow room we need to crack on with the waste retrievals and is the latest example of how simple solutions are delivering hazard and risk reduction on the site.

Next year the team plans to use robotic lasers to cut up and flat pack the skips in order to remove and store them even more efficiently.

Now 66 years old, the open-air fuel pond is one of the 4 high hazard buildings at Sellafield prioritised for clean-up by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA).

Duncan Thompson, Sellafield programme director for the NDA said:

It's great to see lessons learned elsewhere in the NDA estate being applied to the mission at Sellafield.

This is another example of the considerable progress being made in removing the hazard from the pond.