

# News story: Defence Secretary: Britain committed to leading European security

Sir Michael told the annual Munich Security Conference that while Britain is leaving the European Union, the UK would not be stepping back from its role in European security.

Britain's leadership this year is demonstrated by two new major commitments to the NATO Alliance:

- Leading NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, otherwise known as the 'spearhead force'. This UK-led NATO Brigade is ready and willing to respond to any threat the Alliance faces and shows how NATO is strengthening its collective defence and deterrence.
- Deploying a battle group of around 800 personnel to lead in Estonia NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence, another way in which NATO is stepping up to deter threats. Britain will deploy as part of the battle group the United States is leading in Poland, with over 100 troops.

The Defence Secretary also met with his German counterpart, Ursula von der Leyen, where he discussed the unprecedented level of cooperation between the two countries. Sir Michael also welcomed Germany's commitment to increase its defence spending.

Sir Michael, along with the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, yesterday [launched](#) Britain's new strategy for engaging more internationally in defence activity.

The International Defence Engagement Strategy is the way in which all defence activity, short of combat operations, work abroad to prevent conflict, build stability and gain influence internationally.

Speaking at the Munich Secretary Conference, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

Britain is committed to Europe's security, and we're stepping up our engagement internationally. Whether defeating Daesh in Iraq and Syria, deploying with our NATO Allies to deter threats, or engaging globally to help countries develop their security, Britain is playing a major role – and will continue to do so.

The Defence Secretary also confirmed that Britain would keep the momentum up in the fight against Daesh. In Iraq and Syria, the RAF are flying day and night to defeat Daesh.

The RAF hit over 300 targets as part of recent operations to liberate eastern Mosul, and is now focussing efforts on the approaches to the west of the city, where it is expected the liberation operation will begin within days.

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## [News story: Defence Secretary calls on NATO to be fitter, faster, more agile](#)

Attending the annual Munich Security Conference, Sir Michael said the Alliance should not wait for another crisis before it modernises itself.

Calling for an ambitious programme of change, the Defence Secretary outlined three areas for a fitter, faster, more agile NATO:

- Greater flexibility for NATO's top commanders, including the power to move more staff resources around to meet current and future threats.
- Less duplication – the Alliance has five financial control centres.
- Increased coherence – Sir Michael outlined that while improvements were being made, particularly in the merging of intelligence structures, more needed to be done to break down silos.

Describing Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 as a "wake up call" for NATO, the Defence Secretary said NATO members needed to invest more on defence and called on Allies to increase spending every year until the 2% Defence Investment Pledge, agreed at the UK hosted NATO summit in 2014, is met.

At the same time NATO should strengthen its relationships with other organisations, particularly the EU, while avoiding duplication.

Defence Secretary also called on NATO to project stability beyond its borders, by working globally to improve the security areas of fragile nations.

Speaking last night at the conference, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

We want a fitter, faster, more agile NATO. This means more spending on defence by all the Allies, faster, more flexible decision making, and stronger partnerships.

Britain yesterday [launched](#) its International Defence Engagement Strategy, which contained a new plan for how the UK will strengthen cooperation with Allies and partners, allowing Britain to collectively pack a more powerful punch.

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## [Greens denounce Ministers' pandering to industry lobbyists on plastic pollution](#)



18 February 2017

**Keith Taylor MEP: 'These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress.'**

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, has issued a stinging criticism of government Ministers as documents reveal the [influence of plastics industry lobbying](#) on the decision to cut UK recycling targets. The revelations come as the latest 'Great Winter Nurdle Hunt' uncovers [widespread plastic pollution](#) on Britain's beaches.

The UK government quietly reduced recycling targets for plastic waste last year, after dozens of lobby groups and plastic producers pushed for lower rates, according to documents obtained by Energydesk.

Energydesk obtained 62 of the 63 responses to a government consultation on recycling targets.

The majority of respondents to the consultation were plastic producers or industry groups. Of those, all pushed for a reduction in the targets.

Keith, a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, said:

"Plastic pollution is choking our oceans and our beaches, but the documents obtained this week demonstrate the UK Government appears more concerned with protecting the profit margins of multinational corporations and industry lobbyists than safeguarding Britain's natural environment."

"It is extremely concerning that almost three-quarters of UK beaches are blighted by the raw materials of the plastic industry. These plastic pellets pose a significant threat to our precious wildlife and damage the health of our oceans and seas."

"These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress. Far from

being a party working for the many, the Conservatives prove, once again, they are the party of powerful and privileged vested interests.”

“We cannot let the Government use the EU referendum as an excuse further water down essential recycling targets. The [EU Circular Economy Package](#) sets an ambitious and common EU-wide target for recycling 75% of packaging waste by 2030. Ministers must make a firm commitment to maintaining and implementing these ambitious targets post-Brexit.”

“Plastic pollution does not respect borders nor national sovereignty. For the sake of the health of our oceans and our beaches, to protect our precious environment and our beloved wildlife, Theresa May must also commit to maintaining a close relationship with our European neighbours to combat the problem.”

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## [Press release: Prime Minister's plans to transform the way we tackle domestic violence and abuse](#)

Theresa May has today announced plans to transform the way we think about and tackle domestic violence and abuse – one of the most widespread and heinous offences, but one where victims are often let down by the legal system.

Domestic violence and abuse shatters lives but the way we deal with it at the moment does not go far enough – with a plethora of different offences and procedures scattered across the statute book.

This lack of clarity has led to an unacceptable diversity across the country in terms of the degree of effort put in to try and tackle it. Although the prosecution of, and convictions for, such offences have started to improve in recent years, there is inconsistency in the use and effectiveness of the various law enforcement measures across the country.

In recognition of this, the Prime Minister has announced plans for a major new programme of work leading towards bringing forward a Domestic Violence and Abuse Act.

The programme of work will look at what more can be done to improve support for victims especially in the way the law, and legal procedures, currently

work for such victims. Experts in this area will be invited to contribute ideas and proposals for improving the way the system works which is likely to lead to legislation – making it much easier for law enforcement bodies to find and use more consistently the measures at their disposal. The Prime Minister will also ask for any potential ‘quick wins’ in the intervening period to be identified and acted upon. The Prime Minister will directly oversee this work, which will be truly cross-governmental – but co-ordinated by the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice.

Like the [Modern Slavery Act](#), the Prime Minister believes that the measures that come out of this work will raise public awareness of the problem – as well as encourage victims to report their abusers and see them brought to justice.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Domestic violence and abuse is a life shattering and absolutely abhorrent crime; tackling it is a key priority for this government – and something I have always attached a personal importance to, both as Home Secretary and now as Prime Minister. I am clear that we need to build on the [measures I introduced as Home Secretary](#) – including the new offence of ‘Controlling and Coercive Behaviour’, Domestic Violence Protection Orders, and the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme – and ensure that no stone will be left unturned in delivering a system that increases convictions, and works better for victims.

She added:

I believe that the plans I have announced today have the potential to completely transform the way we think about and tackle domestic violence and abuse. There are thousands of people who are suffering at the hands of abusers – often isolated, and unaware of the options and support available to them to end it. Given the central importance of victim evidence to support prosecutions in this area, raising public awareness – as well as consolidating the law – will prove crucial.

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**[Press release: PM meeting with French Prime Minister Cazeneuve: 17 February](#)**

# 2017

From:

First published:

17 February 2017

Part of:

Prime Minister Theresa May met the Prime Minister of France Bernard Cazeneuve and discussed a range of bilateral and foreign policy issues.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister met Prime Minister Cazeneuve of France at Downing Street today. They talked about a range of bilateral issues and also discussed foreign policy and Brexit.

The Prime Minister was clear that while the UK is leaving the EU, we are not leaving Europe, and they talked about the importance of coming to an early agreement on the rights of EU citizens in the UK and UK citizens in the EU.

They agreed on the need to maintain our close co-operation on security and defence, including through NATO. They discussed how we can work together to address the shared global challenges we face, including migration, the situation in Syria and in Ukraine, and the threat of terrorism.