

Press release: Dstl to develop Active Protection System technology

The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has placed a contract with [Leonardo](#) to improve the survivability and protection of Land Armoured Vehicles through Active Protection System (APS) technology. APS can detect and defeat threat missiles within 100 milliseconds, which is less time than half the time it takes a human to react to a visual cue.

As the performance and sophistication of modern battlefield weapon systems continues to improve, the vulnerability of Land Armoured Vehicles and their crew to these threats continues to increase. Dstl is conducting a proof of concept Technical Demonstrator Programme (TDP) to develop a Modular Integrated Protection System (MIPS). Under the Icarus TDP, Leonardo will lead a team of UK industry experts to develop an APS Electronic Architecture (EA) that is founded upon Modular Open System Architecture design principles.

The MIPS Electronic Architecture will provide a common infrastructure that will deliver UK operational sovereignty and enable “best of breed” commercial off the shelf APS sensors and countermeasures to be selected, integrated and deployed to defeat a wide range of current and future battlefield threats. This will enable the provision of a weight-efficient and affordable protection system capability that can be tailored to protect military vehicles against threats such as Rocket Propelled Grenades (RPGs) and Anti-Tank Guided Weapons (ATGWs) thereby helping to protect the lives of the UK Armed Forces.

The TDP will initially secure 45 jobs and has the potential to create up to 250 jobs if the protection system demonstrated is subsequently deployed across the UK Armoured Vehicle fleet. The Icarus TDP is worth £10million to the UK economy.

Richard Hooper, Dragonfire Technical Demonstrator Programme Technical Lead at Dstl said:

By equipping land vehicles with a sustainable and effective active protection capability we will enable mission success to be achieved in ever-more challenging environments.

Ray Hopkins, Vice President Capability UK for Leonardo said:

The MIPS electronic architecture to be developed under the Icarus TDP will enhance survivability across the UK Land Armoured Vehicle fleet by allowing vehicles to be rapidly tailored to counter threats in specific operational scenarios. We look forward to working with Dstl, our team members, and APS equipment vendors to deliver a future operational advantage to the British Army that

will both save lives and protect equipment.

Press release: Change of British High Commissioner to New Zealand: Laura Clarke

2015 to present Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Head, South Asia Department and India Co-ordinator 2012 to 2015 Pretoria, Counsellor (Politics, Prosperity and Communications) 2010 to 2011 Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Joint Head, Sudan Unit, Africa Directorate 2010 Foreign & Commonwealth Office, International Strategy Adviser on Yemen, Middle East and North Africa Directorate 2008 to 2010 Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Private Secretary to the Minister for Europe 2006 to 2008 Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Team Leader, EU Justice and Home Affairs, Germany, Bulgaria and Romania, and UK Special Representative on Post-Holocaust Issues 2005 to 2006 Department for Constitutional Affairs (now Ministry of Justice), Senior Policy Adviser, Human Rights Division, EU and Council of Europe 2004 to 2005 Department for Constitutional Affairs, Policy Officer, Mental Capacity Bill team 2002 European Commission, Brussels, Trainee, Turkey Team, Directorate General – Enlargement

Press release: Secretary of State for Wales at Global Defence Expo

Speaking at Defence & Security Equipment International in London, (13 September) Alun Cairns will tell Defence companies based in Wales that there has never been a better time to increase their exports.

He will tell companies that Wales is already one of the most competitive places in the world to innovate, build business and deliver security, however leaving the European Union presents exciting opportunities for companies across the country.

Alun Cairns said:

Wales is already home to many global defence companies, who have demonstrated their success by securing major contracts in the face of competition from overseas. This is testament to the skills and

expertise of the workforce in Wales and I am delighted to see so many Welsh export and defence companies of all sizes at such a world leading event.

Success is about turning chances into change, so I want these companies to seize this opportunity to explore new markets and discover the opportunities that exiting the EU presents.

The UK Government is committed to backing Welsh businesses and creating the right environment for them to flourish. We are here to support them on their exporting journey, helping them break down barriers and inspire confidence.

Over four days, the London based 'Defence, Security Equipment International' event, DSEI, attracts up to 34,000 visitors with a large exhibiting presence from Welsh based businesses. Meeting with companies such as BCB International, GD UK, Raytheon and smaller SMEs, the Secretary of State for Wales will reaffirm the close partnerships between the sector and show them how the UK Government can support them in exporting, identifying barriers and how they can be broken down ahead of Brexit.

The UK Government has produced an export guide for Welsh businesses, with full details of the support on offer for companies to export: [LINK](#)

Ends

News story: Astana Expo comes to an end after attracting 4 million visitors

- the UK and 114 other countries participated in the Astana 'Future Energy' Expo which ran July to September in Kazakhstan, the first Expo in Central Asia
- the UK, through the Department for International Trade, delivered a business programme focusing on the country's expertise in oil and gas, mining, sustainable energy, finance and infrastructure
- UK Pavilion, awarded Silver Medal in Exhibition Design, had the theme 'We are Energy' exploring new ways to harness the various sources of energy that surround us and secure a greener future

The International Astana Expo in Kazakhstan closed its doors this week bringing an end to the UK's 3-month participation.

The Expo's overarching theme was 'Future Energy', highlighting sustainable

energy solutions and innovative technologies that are vital to the environment and future of the planet.

UK programme at Astana Expo 2017

As well as being a visitor destination attracting over half a million visitors, the UK Pavilion was the platform for a 3-month programme of business, cultural and thought leadership events.

This included receiving delegations from leading British businesses and institutions in the mining, oil and gas and financial-professional services sectors, the latter of which was led by the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Andrew Parmley. Delegation members included:

- Shell
- University of Manchester
- London Stock Exchange Group
- Institute of Chartered Accountants

Ministerial visits to the UK Pavilion

International Trade Minister Greg Hands oversaw the signing of an agreement between one of the world's leading hovercraft manufacturers, Southampton-based Griffon Hoverwork and Kazakh state oil company KazMunayGas' subsidiary KMGSS.

The agreement will see a study being carried out on using hovercraft to clear oil spills and support offshore rigs in the Caspian Sea and has the potential to generate contracts worth over £100 million for new hovercraft, supporting at least 70 jobs in the Southampton area.

International Trade Minister, Greg Hands said:

This summer I saw first-hand the outstanding work from the UK team at the Astana Expo, who demonstrated the very best of British creativity and academic excellence. As an international economic department, the Department for International Trade is committed to promoting UK innovation across the globe.

The UK Pavilion showed why we have a bright future as a global trading nation, and helped introduce UK companies to millions in potential business contracts.

The Rt Hon Charles Hendry, Commissioner, UK Pavilion said:

We have been delighted to participate in Astana Expo 2017 which has re-emphasised the important issue of sustainable energy.

Over the last 3 months the UK, through its award-winning Pavilion,

has delivered a successful programme of cultural, economic and business events in Astana. Through our involvement we have been able to showcase our strong contribution to building a more sustainable future as well as our expertise in new technologies across the energy sector that makes the UK a business partner of choice.

The UK Pavilion and associated activity has further underlined our commitment to continuing to strengthen UK-Kazakhstan business and diplomatic relationships.

Sir Alan Duncan, Minister for Europe and the Americas, also visited the UK Pavilion to mark the 25th anniversary of UK – Kazakhstan diplomatic relations and to announce UK funding of £74,000 to help Kazakhstan implement its on-going Anti-Corruption strategy.

Award-winning design

The UK Pavilion, supported by the Department for International Trade, was designed by British architect Asif Khan who led a team that included music legend Brian Eno and renowned Professor of Astrophysics, Catherine Heymans of Edinburgh University.

Its interactive design and unique sensory experience was recognised by the Expo's organising body, The Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), which awarded it silver in the Exhibition Design category.

Key moments

The UK's heritage in, and global contribution to culture was celebrated throughout the Expo beginning with UK 'National Day' on 26 June which was led by HRH the Duke of Gloucester and showcased British creativity.

British fashion was fused with theatre, music with dance, and literature with spoken word, all culminating a diverse and rich cultural programme.

Events included a:

- live reading of Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone to mark its 20th anniversary
- performance by the London Contemporary Ballet Theatre
- fashion showcase promoting up and coming UK designers

Scotland took centre stage week commencing 7 August with Economy Minister Keith Brown MSP and representatives from Edinburgh-based Heriot Watt University and the Scottish Qualifications Authority attending to promote the UK as a hub for academic excellence. Whilst there, the Minister hosted a business roundtable with attendees including KazMuanyGas and energy services company Wood Group, headquartered in Scotland.

The UK Pavilion hosted 'Engineering Day' on 22 August in association with the

British Chamber of Commerce.

The day provided an opportunity to showcase British capabilities and excellence in manufacturing and engineering technologies and a networking opportunity for British and Kazakhstani companies to build contacts, meet potential partners and distributors to sell their goods and services.

British engineering expertise was on display in the form of the BLOODHOUND, a supersonic car that once finished will reach speeds of over 1,000mph, setting a new world land speed record.

Dubai 2020

Building on the success of the UK's participation at Astana Expo 2017 the government has committed to the next World Expo in Dubai 2020. The Expo's core theme is 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', a testament to human ingenuity that will see the site divided into three districts: opportunity, sustainability and mobility.

Background

Astana Expo 2017 is a 'Specialised Expo'. Such Expos were established by the Bureau International des Expositions in 1988. They are global events dedicated to finding solutions to precise challenges of humanity, such as ocean protection (Expo Yeosu 2012) or the future of energy (Expo Astana 2017).

The UK conceived and convened the first of all 'World Expos', the Great Exhibition of 1851 which led to the creation of the cultural quarter in west London which includes the V&A, Natural History Museum and the Royal College of Music.

Media enquiries

News story: Armed Forces Muslim Personnel Complete Hajj

Led by Islamic Religious Advisor to the Chief of Defence Staff Imam Asim Hafiz, the Hajj was a chance for British Muslim Armed Forces personnel to reflect on the role of their religion as part of their service. Hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Armed Forces (KSA AF), the Hajj took place over the first weekend of September, around Eid celebrations.

Hajj, meaning 'to intend to journey', is the fifth pillar of Islam and requires all Muslims who are able to make a pilgrimage to Mecca and locations

of historical significance related to the Prophet Abraham. The group, which consisted of personnel from the Army and Royal Air Force, visited the Holy Mosque in Mecca, Arafat, Muzdalifah, and Mina. In addition they visited the Prophet's Mosque in Medina.

Captain Tim Rudkin, from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) said:

We have learnt a lot about ourselves and confirmed that Islam is not only compatible with military life, but supports the Armed Forces' values we strive to embody.

This journey has no rival to anything I have done before, with representatives of almost every country it is the largest gathering of people in the world, sharing common goals and values, coexisting peacefully.

During the group's visit to Medina, the pilgrims visited the Prophet's Mosque and toured the site of the Battle of Uhud. Afterwards they travelled to Mina where they stayed in a tent city and performed the daily stoning of the jamarat against three pillars where the devil appeared to the Prophet Abraham. The UK personnel also met with the KSA AF's Head of Religious Affairs Major Muhammed Al Sadan, who spoke of the importance of Hajj and Islam's compatibility of serving in the Armed Forces.

Sergeant Ahmed Dhalai, from MOD, said:

The military gives me the strength to become a better Muslim. My chain of command not only understand the significance of this journey, they actively encourage it as an opportunity to reflect and aim to be a better person, both in and out of the military.

The group also met with the Malaysian Chief of Defence Force General Tan Sri Raja Mohamed Affandi Bin Raja Mohamed Noor, Sudanese Major General (Pilot) Hussein Muhammed Othman, and Senior Bangladeshi officers who offered words of encouragement on religious tolerance and explained the importance of Hajj, not only as a religious obligation for Muslims but as an experience to reflect on as ambassadors to develop greater understanding of faith in our militaries.

Corporal Ceesay Ali, from 1 Medical Regiment, said:

Without doubt this journey I have made is going to make me a better Muslim, a better person, and a better soldier. It has provided me with personal and professional development, as well as allowing me to meet my religious obligation

The Armed Forces personnel entered a raffle across the three services to join the 25,000 pilgrims from the UK travelling to Mecca this year.

A diverse and inclusive force is a stronger force, and the MOD encourages and celebrates diversity, promoting an inclusive working environment. To achieve this a wide range of initiatives under a Defence-wide Diversity and Inclusion Programme have been established. While recruitment is an important element, the wider Defence Diversity and Inclusion Programme (DDIP) takes a much broader view of diversity and inclusion and is driving real change by embedding D&I within the leadership and culture and taking steps to increase the retention and progression of people from underrepresented groups.