

UK to provide 1,000 more surface to air missiles to Ukraine

- UK has provided approximately 1,000 additional surface to air missiles to help counter the Russian threat to Ukrainian infrastructure
- The Defence Secretary made the announcement while visiting training sites alongside the Secretary General of NATO and JEF Defence Ministers
- The UK has now trained over 7,400 recruits from the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), and over 60 AFU Junior leaders

The Defence Secretary Ben Wallace has announced that the UK will shortly complete the delivery of approximately 1,000 additional surface to air missiles to the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU). This comes in response to Ukrainian requests for more air defence capabilities, and the missiles will play a vital role in the provision of air defence for Ukraine and the protection of its critical infrastructure which is being continually targeted by Russia.

The missiles can be used in conjunction with existing Armed Forces of Ukraine capabilities. The equipment consists of launchers and missiles and is capable of shooting down air targets, including Russian drones and cruise missiles.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

This commitment of hundreds more surface to air missiles continues our defensive support for Ukraine against Russian aggression – and will help Ukraine counter the threat from illegal targeting of critical national infrastructure.

The announcement comes as Defence Secretary has today visited two training sites where over 7,400 Ukrainian recruits have been trained by UK forces alongside eight partner nations.

At the sites being used for training, the Defence Secretary welcomed the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg in the morning, and his counterparts from the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) nations this afternoon, some of whom were able to see their own military personnel conducting the training.

Currently 1,900 Ukrainian recruits are in the UK taking part in the training programme and will soon return to their home country. When they complete the training, they are provided with items including combat clothing, body armour and ear defence, waterproofs and sleeping bags.

Recruits are also issued with a fully stocked individual First Aid Kit after learning how to use tourniquets, field dressings and chest seals during training. Recruits leaving the UK will now be provided with extreme cold weather kits, announced by the Prime Minister today, including 25,000 set of extreme cold weather clothing, 20,000 sleeping bags and 150 insulated tents.

The announcement comes in response to Ukrainian requests for more cold weather equipment. Ukraine's troops continue to battle to liberate their country from Russian forces as winter rapidly approaches, when temperatures can sink to minus 20°C and below in parts of the country.

Heavy duty sleeping bags and roll mats, combined with heated accommodation and personal winter clothing, will help to prevent cold-related injuries and ensure troops can operate effectively and efficiently.

Brigadier Justin Stenhouse, Commander of the UK's basic training for Ukrainian recruits said:

We have equipped more than 9,000 Ukrainian recruits to ensure they have the necessary personal protective equipment, including helmet, body armour and webbing, to aid them in fighting against Russian aggression. The effort to support this from across the entire logistic community has been hugely impressive and no small undertaking.

The Ukrainian recruits, many of whom have little to no military experience, have shown exemplary courage, resilience, and a desire to learn which is deeply humbling to observe. Our instructors have done an excellent job in training these recruits to live and fight using their new equipment and transforming them from civilians to soldiers in just five weeks.

[Suella Braverman at the APCC and NPCC Partnership Summit](#)

Introduction

Thank you.

I want to start by congratulating you on the theme you've chosen for this summit. Cutting crime and building confidence is exactly what's needed.

The way to ensure public confidence in the police is to focus on getting the basics right. What I call 'common sense policing'. The kind of policing the law-abiding patriotic majority deserves and expects.

No politically correct distractions, just good old-fashioned policing – with a relentless focus on making our streets, homes, and transport networks safer...

...responding to all burglaries; tackling antisocial behaviour and the horrendous trade in illegal drugs; and supporting victims.

I know that if police officers are properly empowered to do the job for which they signed up, they can really drive down crime. The government wants to see reductions in homicide, other serious violence, and neighbourhood crime – and I know it's possible.

Our best police officers are simply put, the finest in the world. In my time in office, I've witnessed excellence from the policing of Her Majesty the Queen's funeral to the response to disorder in Leicester. I want that excellence to come as standard.

Achievements

I know what good policing looks like because I've seen it in action.

The County Lines and Project ADDER programmes are making huge inroads into defeating the scourge of illegal drugs – tackling supply and disrupting gangs.

Almost three thousand county lines have been closed down since 2019, putting dealers out of business and helping huge numbers escape the clutches of drug addiction and exploitation.

That's work that you achieved and you led.

The work of the Milton Keynes and Thames Valley Police is another great example. There, police are ensuring that those caught carrying knives face swift and certain consequences. That they are arrested, charged, and remanded in custody. More forces should follow this example to send the clear message that carrying weapons on our streets will not be tolerated.

PCCs have played a major role by helping to co-ordinate local, multi-agency work in support of all these objectives.

Performance and standards

Things can be turned around for the better in a comparatively short period of time. Superb leadership from Chief Constable Stephen Watson has made a big difference to Greater Manchester Police.

They are responding there far faster to emergency calls and the number of open investigations has halved since 2021.

How did he do it? He put more bobbies on the beat, pursued every crime, made excellent use of stop and search, and insisted that officers were smartly turned out with polished boots. He rejects woke policing and embraced a back to basics approach. For me, that is excellence in policing.

If we are to maintain a world-class reputation for policing, we need to be willing to learn from others, share best practice, and continuously look to improve.

I am really grateful that Chief Constable Watson has offered to share what he has learned from turning Greater Manchester Police around. Everyone should pay close attention.

Six police forces remain in “engage” – and I expect to see them make the necessary improvements quickly, working constructively with HMICFRS. They have my full support and I want to see them succeed.

I am very concerned that more than half of the forces inspected by HMICFRS in their recent inspection cycle have received poor grades for how they respond to the public and nearly half for how well they investigate crime.

This is fundamental – policing is a public service above all else.

Just last week, HMICFRS released their sobering report into vetting and corruption.

Far too often, standards have not been high enough and despicable people have been able to enter and remain in the police.

Policing is a job that attracts the very best of us. The vast majority of Police officers are exemplary citizens. But anyone who might want to hurt others simply must not be able to join – and those who are otherwise ill-suited need to be weeded out, and quickly.

The report finds that previous warnings have not been acted upon. That is unacceptable. I therefore welcome the fact that the NPCC has promised that Chiefs will do everything necessary to deliver on the recommendations of the report.

It is essential that we get both vetting and recruitment right, which means chief officers must draw from the best and widest pool of talent possible, as well as ensuring consistent and high standards in the vetting processes.

I also welcome the College of Policing’s proposals for change, which follow a full, independent review of progression and development to chief officer ranks. These measures, once implemented, will increase transparency, and open-up access to senior level development.

The government has provided significant investment to the College of Policing to create a National Leadership Centre. It will develop standards and a leadership development framework for all ranks.

The interim findings of Baroness Casey’s review set out unequivocal failures by the Metropolitan Police Service, who did not act effectively on allegations of serious misconduct, in particular instances of sexual misconduct and discrimination.

I know that Sir Mark Rowley shares my view that this is utterly appalling and intolerable. That’s why he has created a new Anti-Corruption and Abuse Command, recognising that change must come from within the Metropolitan Police Service.

But I will not hesitate to act either. I recently announced an internal review into the effectiveness of the police officer dismissals process, for example. And I'm very keen to get your views as we go through that process.

Cutting crime

We have some big challenges when it comes to fighting crime.

I am deeply concerned about the levels of homicide. While the number of murders that took place in the first six months of 2022 suggests the numbers are falling, a reduction will only be possible if the whole policing system works closely together.

The College of Policing's Homicide Prevention Framework, which launched last month, was developed with the NPCC and HMICFRS, and is a great example of collaborative working and the sharing of expertise.

Meanwhile, I am making £130 million available this financial year to tackle serious violence, including £64 million for our network of 20 Violence Reduction Units.

From January, the Serious Violence Duty will place a duty on local partners to work together to tackle the root causes of violence.

As I said at the Conservative Party conference, broken windows matter. There is no such thing as petty crime. Any tolerance of low-level disorder and crime will only beget more serious crime. You all know this, I am sure of it.

It is absolutely correct that all forces have agreed to send an officer to the scene of every residential burglary. I thank you for that commitment. Every kind of neighbourhood crime needs to be tackled robustly if we are to ensure public confidence and trust.

The Safer Streets Fund has supported interventions addressing local needs across England and Wales, which is why the government announced a further £50 million earlier this year to support 111 projects.

I also want to see a major improvement in the way the whole of the criminal justice system deals with rape. It is promising that more victims of sexual offences are coming forward to report crimes to the police and that more suspects are being charged.

But we still have a very long way to go. As a society, too often, we have failed the victims of sexual violence. That cannot continue.

Operation Soteria is an innovative and ambitious programme, supported by the Home Office, which is bringing together frontline policing, the CPS, and academic expertise to transform the response to rape.

The new national operating models being developed by the programme will, from June 2023, support your police forces in delivering a sustainable shift in the way rape is investigated.

Officers need to be and will be better equipped to build strong cases and to focus on the behaviour of the suspect, rather than subjective assessments of a victim's credibility.

Avon and Somerset, the pioneering force in Operation Soteria, have reported that charge rates have tripled since they began the pilot, and arrests are twice as high.

Policing must seize the opportunities presented by Operation Soteria to further improve your response to rape.

The final report by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse published last month shows how endemic these unspeakable crimes are.

The first-hand accounts of the terrible abuse endured by children and how badly they were let down by those who should have protected them are truly shocking. This report has redoubled my determination to do all in my power to end the scourge of child sexual abuse.

Along with the overwhelming majority of the public, I am disgusted that misplaced cultural and political sensitivities in places like Manchester, Rotherham, and Telford got in the way of tackling wicked grooming gangs preying on vulnerable children.

We will drive radical change.

The Home Office will take whatever action is available to us to make our communities safer. In Rochdale, the two foreign nationals who were members of that terrible grooming gang were deported. Other members of the group were deprived of their British nationality and the Home Office remains absolutely committed to deporting these individuals where the law allows it.

This is not just a matter for the police – it is a matter for all of us – the law-abiding majority, but it is right that HMICFRS is inspecting the police response to grooming gangs.

As Home Secretary, I'll ensure that there are no safe spaces for rapists, paedophiles, domestic abusers, grooming gangs, burglars, or criminals of any kind. Those convicted – particularly repeat and sexual offenders – should expect longer sentences. And I will talk honestly and unapologetically about crime – which is never justified and which needs to be investigated and rooted out fearlessly.

Our police officers' time is precious, and the public want the police to be tackling crime, not debating genders on Twitter. I have asked my officials to revisit the issue of non-crime hate incidents as a first step, as I want to be sure that we are allowing you to prioritise your time to deal with threats to people and their property.

Underpinning all of this is transparency and accountability – we must not shy away from being open and honest with the public about performance.

Strip search is one of the most intrusive powers you have at your disposal.

There is a grim reality that many of you in this room will recognise. Many criminals will stop at nothing to evade detection. Sometimes, people may carry items that pose a danger to themselves, or others, concealed on them. Strip search is therefore a necessary and essential power and one that this government supports the police to use to protect the public and fight crime.

However, any strip search must be carried out professionally, respectfully, and lawfully, with full consideration for the welfare and dignity of the person being searched, particularly when they are a child.

What the government is doing to support policing

I am on your side.

I want us all to pull in the same direction. And I will do everything in my power to support you and to back you.

Officers and staff show remarkable commitment to keeping the public safe in the face of danger.

Detectives do extraordinary work to ensure we can put criminals behind bars.

So I cannot help but feel a deep sense of gratitude and pride when officers and staff have their bravery and commitment formally recognised through medals, honours, and awards.

However, I recognise that this only represents a fraction of the outstanding actions taken every day by our police across the country. I want to ensure that the amazing job you do is recognised in full, and we are committed, through the Police Covenant, to ensuring that this is done correctly.

I am committed to supporting you in using your powers without fear or favour to keep our streets, and keep our people safe. Under my watch you have my full backing to use stop and search, which is a vital tool in the fight against crime.

Since 2019, the government has been making it easier for you to use stop and search, by relaxing restrictions on Section 60 powers, used in anticipation of violence, and empowering you to stop and challenge known knife carriers through Serious Violence Reduction Orders.

Every knife seized through stop and search is a potential life saved. In the 12 months to March this year, you removed around 14,900 weapons and firearms from our streets through stop and search and made almost 67,000 arrests following a stop.

To those who try to undermine your use of stop and search, or question your legitimate use of investigatory powers, or the use of force which leads to the prevention of crime, I say this: our police are working to keep you safe. To keep your children safe. To save lives. Let them do their work.

It is only right that you can stand firm against criminals, rather than listening to those who would denigrate your work or use data selectively to

undermine your credibility.

On a daily basis, our police officers put themselves in harm's way to protect us.

Taser is a vital tactical option. I saw how vital a tool this can be when I visited Thames Valley police to observe firearms training.

In March 2020, the government gave more than £6 million to forces to purchase over 7,000 devices, increasing the number of officers who are trained in and have a Taser.

In August 2020, we approved the use of the Taser 7, a more accurate and effective device, for policing.

In March we approved the use of Taser by specially trained special constables.

I am committed to ensuring that the police have access to Tasers wherever appropriate.

Of course it's not just violent criminals on our streets that we are determined to stop. I also want to see more fraudsters caught and brought to justice. I am sure that is an ambition we all share.

The government is allocating a further £400 million over the next three years for tackling economic crime including fraud.

By March 2025, over 330 new officers dedicated to this work will have been recruited into City of London Police, Regional Organised Crime Units and the National Crime Agency. We will replace the current Action Fraud system with a new and improved service, and we will increase intelligence capabilities in the NCA and the national security community to identify and disrupt the most harmful criminals and serious organised criminal gangs.

And we are making sure that the biggest tech companies are doing everything they can to prevent online fraud through our world-leading Online Safety Bill.

The latest figures from the Police Uplift Programme show we have recruited more than 15,000 additional officers – so we are well on the way to 20,000. I have met some of these new officers, and it is great to see their enthusiasm for their new careers; some not far from here, in a Safer Neighbourhood Team within the Met.

The College of Policing has been working hard to raise the standards of initial entry and ensure officers are equipped to meet the challenges of policing today. And we know that to build public confidence, we must draw from the widest possible pool of talent across all sections of society.

To deliver this, forces must increase efforts to implement the new entry routes successfully. Whilst I have heard some good things about the new entry routes, such as better retention of officers who feel better equipped to do

the job, I have also heard from many of you that there is a need for more flexibility to ensure broad access to a policing career.

So, I have asked the College to build on their work by considering options for a new non-degree entry route, to deliver officers of the highest calibre, which will complement the existing framework. In the meantime, the current transitional non degree entry route will be kept open.

Our police force must be open to those who do not have a degree or want one.

And I will take the scissors to any red tape that gets in your way. Sir Stephen House's Operational Productivity Review will be particularly useful in this endeavour.

I am concerned that crime recording requirements can be seen as too complex and burdensome. I am committed to working with the police to see how recording can be simplified without compromising on putting victims first.

I also want to see policing and the National Health Service work better together to support individuals experiencing acute mental health distress so that people in need of medical help get the right care at the right time, while also reducing inappropriate demand on policing.

New public order legislation will improve your ability to pre-emptively tackle unlawful protests and tackle repeat offenders, and new criminal offences will allow for punitive outcomes that reflect the harm caused by the selfish, criminal minority.

Past decisions by the courts have made your job more challenging. My reference to the Court of Appeal has proven that the Ziegler ruling has been misinterpreted and has only a limited scope.

Although most police officers do an excellent job, sadly, in recent months and years we have seen an erosion of confidence in the police to take action against the radicals, the road-blockers, the vandals, the militants and the extremists.

But we have also seen the police appear to lose confidence in themselves; in yourselves. In your authority, in your power. An institutional reluctance. This has to change.

Criminal damage, obstructing the highway, public nuisance – none of it should be humoured. It is not a human right to vandalise a work of art. It is not a civil liberty to stop ambulances getting to the sick and injured.

Such disruption is a threat to our way of life. It does not 'further a cause'. It is not 'freedom of expression' and I want to reassure you that you have my – and this government's – full backing in taking a firmer line to safeguard public order. Indeed, that is your duty.

Scenes of members of the public taking the law into their own hands are a sign of a loss of confidence and I urge you all to step up to your public duties in policing protests. The law-abiding patriotic majority is on your

side. This is what common-sense policing means.

Too often, a restricted interpretation of legislation is taken. A lack of certainty on the meaning of serious disruption to the life of the community and how the cumulative impact of repeated protests should be considered has led to a limited use of existing powers. I hope to see improved guidance on these matters so that public order commanders and officers can make full use of the powers available to them with confidence.

The public order act will give you more tools but too often, the rights of protesters are placed above the rights of others. Criminal activists cannot be allowed to bring misery and chaos to the law-abiding majority. Free speech and the right to protest do not entitle people in a democracy like ours to break the law. And importantly, the legitimate use of your force safeguards freedoms for all of us to enjoy.

My thoughts and wishes go to the Essex Police officer who was injured this morning on the M25 while responding to the guerrilla tactics of Just Stop Oil protesters.

Building confidence

Policing is a very difficult job with a simple mission: to keep the law-abiding majority safe. And to keep the criminals off our streets.

That means that the public have a set of basic expectations of policing. They expect to be able to contact their local police, they expect to see police in their neighbourhood confronting crime and making their streets safer. They expect the police to get the basics right.

It has been almost 10 years since the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners – elected by the public to be their voice and to hold chief constables to account.

I am very grateful for the work you have done since 2012, bringing the system together to deliver local priorities and advocating for victims across the criminal justice system.

In Devon and Cornwall, for example, the PCC has commissioned a strategic delivery partnership with Victim Support to put victim's needs at the centre of service commissioning. And in Northumbria they have developed and championed the Multi-Agency Tasking and Coordination approach for improving partnership working in domestic abuse, providing a model that others have since adopted.

But I want you to go further. I am committed to delivering the recommendations from the PCC Review so that you have the tools you need to be strong and visible leaders in the fight against crime.

It will give you a more defined role in relation to offender management and local partnerships, including strengthening the arrangements of Local Criminal Justice Boards.

I also want to see better and more consistent data, which underpins a joined-up approach to local crime fighting activity.

I am overseeing new central guidance on data-sharing, as well as bringing together local level examples of good practice, to help build a more data-confident culture. I also want to see more data transparency to drive up standards across policing.

And I want to say how much I admire Chief Constables – and indeed officers of all ranks. It is precisely because I believe in the police that I have such high expectations – expectations which I know the best among you desperately want all officers to meet.

I want to hear from you, I want to have a meaningful dialogue with all of you. I want our senior police officers to understand better what is happening on the ground, and how you are making innovative operational decisions to stop crime and apprehend perpetrators – I will be asking for regular correspondence from all of you on your crucially important efforts.

Conclusion

British policing is respected throughout the world.

I feel very optimistic about the years ahead. Brilliant people keep coming forward to serve. Inspired and inspiring leaders are driving change in their force and their community.

And we already have a template that works.

It dates back to the days of Robert Peel.

Technology may change and new challenges will come along – yet the basics remain the same.

If we all stay true to that tradition of public service, we will succeed and we will succeed together.

Thank you.

Environmental charity windfall after companies' recycling errors

- Environment Agency enforcement action leads to civil sanctions for 3 companies

- £87,000 to go to environmental charities

- Benefits include species and habitats enhancement, community engagement, and improved visitor access to natural environments

A tech firm, a drinks company and a home furnisher will pay a total of almost £87,000 to good causes after they failed to comply with packaging waste regulations designed to protect the environment.

Softcat plc, a well-known IT infrastructure and services provider based in Marlow, has pledged £35,803.99 to the National Trust, after failing to comply with the law for more than a decade.

Meanwhile, alcoholic drinks giant Sazerac UK Limited, based in Hampton Wick, will contribute £45,088.49 to Surrey Wildlife Trust after failure to comply from 2017 to 2019.

And iconic furniture name La-Z-Boy UK Limited, based in Maidenhead, will give £5,736.89 to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust, due to non-compliance in 2020.

All 3 recognised that they had failed to comply with the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007 (as amended), which ensure that businesses fund the recycling of the packaging waste that they place on the UK market.

By failing to register with a compliance scheme and to take reasonable steps to recover and recycle packaging waste, the businesses also avoided paying a charge based on how much packaging they got through in the same period.

The money paid to the charities will help provide and protect local wildlife habitats and wetland areas, and improve people's access to and enjoyment of these places.

Environment Agency senior technical officer Jake Richardson said:

Any company handling more than 50 tonnes of packaging a year, and with a turnover of above £2 million, must register with the Environment Agency or a packaging compliance scheme, and meet their responsibilities for recycling waste packaging.

If companies fail to meet their obligations under environmental law, we will take action to ensure that they change their ways.

The Environment Agency accepted proactive enforcement undertaking offers from all of the companies, a type of civil sanction which allows businesses to make amends while demonstrating how they will comply with the law in future.

The companies each agreed to register with a compliance scheme, revise internal processes and assign a responsible person.

Mr Richardson added:

The companies also agreed to take measures to ensure they comply with their packaging waste responsibilities in the future.

As well as the charitable contributions, they paid the Environment Agency's full costs.

We're satisfied that they won't repeat their mistakes.

The Environment Agency uses enforcement undertakings for suitable cases, in accordance with its enforcement and sanctions policy. It reserves prosecutions for cases where evidence shows high levels of culpability and serious environmental harm.

Anyone who spots pollution should report it to the Environment Agency via its free 24-hour incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60.

La-Z-Boy UK Limited, 6 Bell Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire SL6 1BU

The offences relate to failure to comply for registration year 2020, including failure to:

The company will:

- register with a compliance scheme
- revise its internal work procedures
- assign a responsible person
- implement a new methodology
- cover the Environment Agency's costs
- contribute £5,736.89 to Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust.

La-Z-Boy UK Limited has chosen to make a financial contribution to the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust's Moor Copse project, which aims to:

- Maintain the biodiversity of a very scarce habitat in the UK
- Increasing the number of important grassland species such as yellow rattle, common knapweed, great burnet, orchids, and crested dog's tail,

on the drier grassland.

- On the wetter parts of the grassland, in hollows and furrows, maintain and increase species such as meadowsweet, water avens, ragged robin and marsh marigold
- Enhance the visitor experience.

Sazerac UK Limited, 60 Marina Place, Hampton Wick, Kingston Upon Thames KT1 4BH

The offences relate to failure to comply for years 2017 to 2019 inclusive, including failure to:

The company will:

- register with a compliance scheme
- revise its internal work procedures
- introduce director-level sign-off procedures
- implement a new methodology
- assign a responsible person
- provide regular updates and training
- cover the Environment Agency's costs
- contribute £45,088.49 to Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Sazerac UK Limited has chosen to make a financial contribution to The Surrey Wildlife Trust's 'Empowering communities' project, which aims to:

- Engage, inspire and upskill local community groups to help reverse the decline of pollinator species through creating green corridors and space for nature to move, adapt and thrive.
- Create and restore habitat within key biodiversity areas.

- Support local groups and produce toolkits for communities.

Softcat PLC, Solar House, Fieldhouse Lane, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 1LW

The offences relate to failure to comply for years 2007 to 2020 inclusive, including failure to:

The company will:

- register with a compliance scheme
- implement a new written procedure
- assign a responsible person
- cover the Environment Agency's costs
- contribute £35,803.99 to the National Trust.

Softcat Plc has chosen to make a financial contribution to the National Trust's Langham Pond Boardwalk project, which aims to:

- alleviate the impact of visitors on the surrounding landscape through the installation of 60m of boardwalks at key areas.
- Create new access to the wetland which was previously inaccessible before.
- Help maintain the natural flora, fauna and British duckweed which supports populations of some of the UK's rarest species.
- Enhance the visitor experience.

Media enquiries: 0800 141 2743

Sharing intelligence and expertise

with U.S.

News story

In support of the security of both nations and our allies, the Ministry of Defence maintains a strong relationship with the US Department of Defense.



Honorable Ron Moultrie with General Sir Jim Hockenhull

Strategic Command, which leads on cyber activity for Defence, plays a key role in sustaining and advancing this relationship.

Recently UKStratCom hosted Honorable Ron Moultrie, U.S. Under Secretary for Intelligence and Security, during his visit to the UK for a series of engagements with Defence personnel.

Defence Intelligence facilitated a series of discussions between Hon Ron Moultrie and UK officials on the operational use of intelligence, including with newly appointed Chief of Defence Intelligence Adrian Bird CB.

Hon Moultrie also visited several Strategic Command sites to understand more about how the organisation uses digital capabilities and intelligence to benefit operations and military effectiveness.

Speaking on the visit, Commander Strategic Command General Sir Jim Hockenhull said

At Strategic Command our aims of accelerating the digitisation of Defence go hand in hand with the effective use of intelligence and data.

The U.S. is our foremost ally and partner in this area, and our working relationship in various domains, including cyber, helps to protect us from an array of threats.

Putin's failures are becoming apparent to the Russian people: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Mr Chair. It is now over 250 days since we, along with the rest of the world, witnessed the start of President Putin's unprovoked, premeditated and barbaric attack on Ukraine. Throughout this time, we have highlighted the truth in the face of Russia's disinformation and propaganda. In addition to the horrendous violence Russia has and continues inflict on the Ukrainian people, there has been an enormous cost to the people of Russia too. Thousands of young Russian lives have been lost on land, at sea and in the air; fighting in an illegal war of choice based on contrived rationales, confused narratives and shifting goals. This is not conjecture, this is not opinion, it is fact.

The failures of Putin's horrendous adventurism are becoming increasingly apparent to the Russian people. They are becoming increasingly aware that their recently mobilised family members, neighbours and friends are being badly trained, badly equipped and then sent to the battlefield to reinforce poorly equipped, poorly led and demoralised professional soldiers. It is perhaps no wonder then that so many Russians have chosen to flee their own country to avoid mobilisation.

Meanwhile, on the battlefield, Russian military leaders continue to commit more and more Russian troops to the war in an attempt to overcome their failures. Due to low morale and a reluctance to fight, Russian forces have now reportedly started to deploy "barrier troops" or "block units". These units threaten to shoot their own retreating soldiers in order to compel offensives.

Low morale, indiscipline and dysfunction continues to reach the highest levels of Russia's military leadership too. On 3 November, Major General Alexander Linkov was reportedly appointed acting commander of Russia's Central Military District. Linkov replaces Colonel General Alexander Lapin who was purportedly removed from office at the end of October. If confirmed, this is just the latest in a series of dismissals of senior Russian military commanders since the onset of the invasion last February, including the Commanders of the Eastern, Southern, and Western Military Districts. A pattern of blame against senior Russian military commanders for failures to achieve President Putin's objectives on the battlefield.

It is worth noting that Colonel General Lapin had been widely criticised for poor performance on the battlefield in Ukraine by both Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin. The latter appears to be gaining increasing influence in the Kremlin, with his private military company being

increasingly relied upon to provide fundamental security tasks normally expected of the Russian State.

For example, on 6 November, Prigozhin announced the creation of centres for the training and management of “people’s militias” in Belgorod and Kursk oblasts in

Russia. These “people’s militias” probably function outside the Russian MOD’s structure and chain of command. Their stated intent is to establish units to help defend Russia’s borders.

Meanwhile, as Russia scrambles to fortify its defensive lines throughout eastern Ukraine, Prigozhin announced the construction of a fortified ‘Wagner Line’ of defences in Luhansk oblast. The construction represents a significant effort to prepare defences in depth behind the current Russian front line and protect a key logistics line of communication.

However, as we noted last week, Wagner’s recruitment of Russian convicts including individuals suffering from serious diseases and medical conditions, is a sign of desperation to recruit numbers not fighters. According to the Ukrainian Centre for Researching and Combating Hybrid Threats, 500 Wagner recruited convicts had died fighting in Ukraine by mid-October. In total, the centre assesses 800-1000 Wagner recruits have likely died in Ukraine. Wagner numbers have been further depleted by substantial non-fatal casualties.

That Wagner, a private military company linked to human rights abuses, is being increasingly relied upon to conduct roles normally expected of a government’s security and military apparatus is itself a telling indicator of the parlous state of Putin’s war machine: more defeats; more Generals sacked; more demoralised troops; more discontent amongst the Russian population; and more critique from Russia’s elites.

Mr Chair, Putin and the Russian military leadership have consistently underestimated the will, determination and courage of the Ukrainian military and civilians to defend their homeland from a brutal and barbaric invader. They continue to fail to understand that every horrendous attack strengthens the Ukrainian resolve and that of its friends, like the UK, who remain steadfast in our support – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is fully restored. Thank you.