

[News story: Social hub takes shape at Worthy Down](#)

The new building, which is part of a £250 million tri-service facility that DIO is building at Worthy Down in Hampshire, includes four bars, a large dining room, kitchens, recreational, food court and shopping facilities. The internal fit out of the CRL will now start. Once up and running the CRL will be the social hub for the Junior Ranks'. It will be a central meeting place and leisure facility for permanent staff and visiting students. The CRL is one of 26 buildings that the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) is delivering with our main contractor, Skanska. The 26 buildings we're providing are a mix of technical training and classroom facilities and accommodation.

Peter Riches, DIO Project Manager for the project, said:

DIO supports service personnel by providing a fit-for-purpose estate and accommodation so we're pleased to be working with Skanska to deliver these facilities. The CRL will provide students from the college with a first class, modern leisure and recreational facility that should make their overall experience of the college a pleasant one.

Paul Weale, Project Director for Skanska, said:

We're pleased that the CRL facility meets both the military and DIO's expectations, in terms of its function and quality. This building has been created through strong collaboration between the DIO and Skanska and will meet the needs of personnel from all three services for many years to come.

Once complete, the DCPLA site at Worthy Down will enable the Ministry of Defence (MOD) to train personnel more effectively and efficiently to deliver the best possible support for military operations. Locating the tri-services' training to one site will support centralised training and provide better resources. In addition, military personnel will have the opportunity to share best practice and knowledge to deliver the individual training requirements. Savings will be delivered through economies of scale, shared resources, technology and the disposal of selected sites.

Brigadier Steve Shirley, who will be in charge of the college when it opens, said:

The CRL building will provide both our students and staff with a modern meeting place where they can enjoy much-earned recreational

time. The facilities are superb. I am very proud to be leading on such a prominent project that will bring modern, multi-purpose facilities to Worthy Down.

The college will provide specialist training facilities and modern accommodation for up to 1,500 students, designed in a series of 'villages'; one for Junior Ranks, one for Officers and one for Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (SNCOs). Trainees and permanent staff will have access to sports and recreation facilities, Officer and SNCO Messes, including supporting amenities. The Royal Logistics Corps Museum will also relocate to Worthy Down into a purpose built exhibition space, which will be available for soldiers, families and community use.

[News story: Defence Minister visits a hub for Queen Elizabeth Class Carrier Programme](#)

The Minister visited some of the aircraft and met with personnel stationed at the base. RNAS Culdrose is the heart of the naval air fleet, where naval aviators train. The base is an important part of the programme, which will deliver the two Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers, the largest warships ever built in the UK and from which the UK's new F-35B Lightning II jets will fly.

After visiting the Merlin training facility, the Defence Minister saw the Dummy Flight Deck, designed to train QEC aircraft handlers among others, where she witnessed live training exercises. The skilled aircrew and engineers at the base specialise in anti-submarine warfare and Airborne Surveillance and Control.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin, said:

It was an honour to visit one of Europe's largest helicopter bases and meet the men and women behind its success. The state-of-the art facilities are helping to test and safeguard our maritime aircraft capacity.

The base provides 3,000 civilian and military jobs and is one of the biggest single-site employers in Cornwall, pumping £100m into the local economy every year, bringing welcome regional investment.

Many of the Merlins based at Culdrose will be fitted with the Crowsnest

system, as [announced recently](#) in a £269 million deal. The system will act as the eyes and ears for the Royal Navy's ships, providing long range air, maritime and land detection and tracking capability. Crowsnest is an important step in the ambitious carrier programme, which will be vital to protect the new vessels.



A weapon being loaded onto the Merlin Weapons Systems Trainer. Crown Copyright.

The Commanding Officer of RNAS Culdrose, Captain Danny Stembridge ADC said:

It was a privilege to welcome the Defence Minister to Culdrose this week, and to discuss the vital role its people continue to play in the defence of our nation. She visits at a very important time for us; whilst we continue to deliver our primary roles of protecting the Nuclear Deterrent and supporting Counter Terrorism, we are also getting ready to defend the Royal Navy's Carrier Task Groups.

HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Nation's new flagship, will sail into Portsmouth Harbour this year and Naval Air Power will be at the forefront of this nation's deployed capabilities. It is essential that we at RNAS Culdrose are ready to play our important role in this exciting new venture. Indeed, aircraft from 820 Naval Air Squadron, will be the very first to land on the flight deck of the new carrier.

The Minister also visited A&P Group and World Fuels at Falmouth docks. A&P support and maintain the Royal Fleet Auxiliary's four Bay Class ships, one of which is currently stationed in The Gulf. Last year the ships conducted operations in the Caribbean and Mediterranean.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

I am delighted to be in Falmouth, which has a vital ship repair capability, sustaining jobs and part of a UK-wide carrier effort.

[Speech: First Sea Lord speech on the Royal Navy in 2017](#)

After 23 years as a member, 2 on the Committee and nearly 6 on the Navy Board, it's a pleasure to attend Founders Day as First Sea Lord and to share a few insights with you as I approach my first anniversary in the job.

Over the past year, I've had the privilege to represent the Royal Navy extensively at home and abroad.

Last spring, the nation paused to remember the centenary of the Battle of Jutland. I met many descendants, including the family of Jack Cornwell VC, at the unveiling of his memorial in Leyton. His great, great, nephew, AB Alex Saridis, is now serving in HMS Iron Duke, proof that our career managers have a sense of history.

Later, I was in Liverpool for the 75th Anniversary of the Arctic Convoys, where I met some remarkable veterans of "the worst journey in the world." I also had the honour of presenting the Lord Mayor of Liverpool with her late father's Arctic Star.

In both cases I was reminded of how deep the British public's affection for the Royal Navy runs.

Then, towards the end of the year, I was in Auckland for the 75th Anniversary of the Royal New Zealand Navy. Even though that nation has successfully forged its own distinct place in the world, the familial bonds between our two navies are no less strong.

But, without doubt, the best thing about the past year has been hearing about the accomplishments of our sailors and marines.

One that sticks in the mind was the father of new-born twins who, in spite of the sleepless nights, had been inspirational in leading his department to design and train force protection teams for HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Another was a marine engineering submariner who worked in excess of 100 hours a week to bring a 30-year old Trafalgar-class nuclear submarine out of maintenance and ready for sea ahead of schedule.

Then there was the young Leading Medical Assistant from HMS Enterprise who led the triage process for hundreds of rescued migrants, dealing with pregnancies, gunshot wounds and everything in between.

That particular mission is ongoing. HMS Echo was the only ship from the EU's Operation Sophia on duty over Christmas, in which time she pulled another 500 men, women and children from the Mediterranean.

We can be very proud of the compassion and professionalism of our sailors and marines in responding to what is possibly the largest humanitarian in our lifetimes.

But if you worry that our fighting instincts are in some way being softened, I would simply point you to the Gulf, where Commander Amphibious Task Group, Commodore Andrew Burns, and his staff are leading CTF-50, which plans and conducts coalition strike operations in a region where the threat level has the potential to escalate quickly.

They are embarked in HMS Ocean, currently our largest warship – but the men and women of our smaller vessels are no less mindful of the seriousness of their responsibilities.

In the face of almost daily provocation, the young ship's companies of the Gibraltar Squadron – led by Commanding Officers still in their twenties – are exhibiting judgement and restraint beyond their years and, in doing so, have revealed a bold and assertive style of ship handling in the very highest traditions of the service.

I have every expectation that there is a future Nelson or Cunningham among them.

Everything I have seen and heard since I become First Sea Lord has reaffirmed my faith that our nation is blessed with the best sailors and marines of any navy, supported by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and a Civil Service that remains the envy of the world.

Of course, you would expect me to say this, and this audience knows it anyway – many of you helped lay the foundations upon which today's Navy rests. But now, more than ever, we must ensure the nation understands how hard our men and women are working on its behalf.

Three Theatres

As for the operational context, I do not intend to dwell too heavily, because it should be plainly apparent from the newspapers, not least those images of the Admiral Kuznetsov belching out black smoke like a dreadnought of yesteryear as she steamed past our shores.

In the Atlantic, our commitment to NATO continues to grow. In Norway, the

Royal Marines have been training the US Marine Corps in cold weather warfare. Underwater, the Deterrent edges ever closer to a half-century of unbroken patrol, while our attack submarines have been very busy indeed, in ways that many of you know well, and the rest will have to imagine.

As for the Mediterranean, for many of us it was a place where we enjoyed the company of FOST as we worked up to go East of Suez. Now, sadly, it has become an operational theatre in its own right, as we respond to the concurrent challenges of Russians, Radicals and Refugees, to borrow a phrase from SACEUR.

We've been leaning heavily on the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and on our survey ships and patrol vessels in this theatre, and they have stepped up to the plate in the most remarkable way.

HMS Mersey, for example, will shortly return from a 13 month deployment that began in the Caribbean and ended 38,000 miles later in the Aegean; an astonishing accomplishment for a vessel under 2000 tonnes and a ship's company of just 52.

I should also mention our reservists – rarely in the limelight – who have been serving on Border Force Cutters in the Aegean. If your memories of the RNR are of weekends team sweeping with the 10th MCM Squadron, that's ancient history now. They are serving right alongside their regular counterparts in almost everything we do.

Finally, the Foreign Secretary recently told the Manama Dialogue that "Britain is back East of Suez".

He's not wrong – but, in truth, the Gulf has been the Royal Navy's 'home from home' for the past thirty-five years, and today, at any one time, we have a minimum of 7 ships and 1100 sailors and marines in the region, plus two naval helicopter detachments.

Royal Marines are a big part of our presence in the wider Middle East, with training teams visiting Kenya, Somaliland and Kuwait to name just a few examples.

I could say more about all three theatres – and our other duties– but, suffice to say, the world is getting less certain and less safe, and demands on the Royal Navy are growing.

Perspective

This brings me to the crux of what I want to say tonight, which is about our challenges and opportunities.

The word I keep coming back to is perspective – perspective on the kind of Navy we are today, and perspective on the kind of Navy we can be in the years ahead.

You will be familiar with much of the recent coverage of the Type 45 destroyers, which in many ways is emblematic of the challenges we face more

widely.

This was the first new destroyer type in over thirty years. Almost every system on board was designed from scratch. In the end, the power and propulsion system fell short of what we hoped, but the air defence system turned out to exceed all expectations.

It's not ideal, but the money is now in place to put it right. Had the problem been the other way around, it would have been altogether more difficult to fix.

But the real truth about the Type 45 is to be found not in the pages of newspapers but at the sharp end of operations.

Last year, HMS Defender spent over 100 days protecting US and French carrier groups in the Middle East without losing a single day of tasking to machinery defects.

Meanwhile, following attacks on coalition vessels by Houthi rebels, HMS Daring was quietly deployed to the coast of Yemen.

Her ship's company spent 39 days in Defence Watches and over 97 hours at Action Stations as they accompanied 650,000 tonnes of coalition shipping through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait at the height of the threat.

This kind of mission – in this kind of environment – is precisely that for which the Type 45 was conceived.

Where it matters most, the Type 45 has proved itself to be one of the most capable air defence destroyers in the world, and the escort of choice for our most important, and demanding, coalition partners.

We demand the best from our people and equipment and, in doing so, the challenges we face are those of a first rate Navy.

The same is true across the board.

The financial constraints we face are shared across the public sector, and the scrutiny, regulation and efficiency challenges by our partner navies.

Our most pressing manpower shortfalls are not unique to the Royal Navy either – many of the same issues apply to other technology-dependent organisations, and we are working with industry to bring forward the next generation of engineers to meet both our needs.

Yet despite these challenges, the Royal Navy retains a position of global leadership, as evidenced by the international success of FOST and BRNC, and our permanent leadership roles in NATO and the Middle East.

I was in Manila in the autumn to represent CDS at a US PACOM-sponsored conference of military leaders from the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. It was apparent that many of the most significant security issues in that part of the world are maritime in character, and our friends want to work with and

learn from the Royal Navy – indeed, last year I signed a historic agreement for closer cooperation with the Japanese Navy.

So the Royal Navy still sets the international maritime standard and the demand is growing. This, more than anything else, is the measure of the kind of Navy we are.

Of course I recognise we have challenges. Much of my time is spent working with Ministers, the Head Office and my fellow Chiefs to put them right. But everything is relative, and my job is to lead the Navy to make the most of the resources we have – and the significant investment coming our way – in order to be the best Navy we can. I am grateful for the support, the leadership and the commitment of my top team and Navy Board colleagues here tonight.

There's a lot of difficult work involved, but our efforts now will shape the Navy – and the UK's place in the world – for decades to come.

So as we grip these challenges, it's critical that we don't sell ourselves short, or lose our long term focus.

Because the single most important factor in our success is belief: our people need to believe in the Navy's future in order to believe in their own future within the Service.

But we can't do it alone. The Navy Board and I need you – our friends and advocates – right behind us.

Opportunity

In drawing to a close, let me add a final, personal, perspective.

The 35th anniversary of the Falklands Conflict is now just a few weeks away.

As the senior serving veteran, I am looking forward to playing my part to ensure the contribution, and the sacrifice, of all those involved in that extraordinary endeavour is recognised.

Today, we rightly marvel at the audacity of our accomplishment in that campaign, so far from home.

Yet, as many of you well know, the early 1980s was far from a happy time for the Royal Navy in capability terms.

The submarine force was growing but everything else was either shrinking or, in the case of our amphibious capability, about to go altogether.

That included my own ship, HMS Fearless.

So if you'd told 21-year-old Acting Sub Lt Philip Jones that in 35 years' time he would be leading the Royal Navy as it renewed the nuclear deterrent, commissioned two 65,000 tonne strike carriers and fifth generation fighters, reopened a naval base East of Suez, with a construction programme for

submarines and frigates stretching far into the future, I'm not sure he would've believed you...but he would probably have been quite pleased.

Yet those are the hard facts of where we are today.

And the impending arrival of the Queen Elizabeth-class carriers is just the beginning.

Last December, the Prime Minister stood on the deck of HMS Ocean and told the assembled audience that the Royal Navy was central to her vision for Britain to forge a new positive, confident role for our country on the global stage.

The Government has stated – repeatedly – its intention to increase the overall size of the Navy by the 2030s, and now the Type 31e programme is in train to do just that.

So, the vision for the Navy is clear; the equipment is on its way; and the possibilities are growing – what is required now is the sustained focus and effort to reach out and grasp the opportunity.

In short, I cannot remember a time when the Royal Navy has been more relevant to the UK's security challenges, or more important to our global ambitions.

I'm not alone – people are listening – and the real scandal would be if we allowed this precious opportunity to slip through our fingers.

So we mustn't be distracted from our course or dissuaded in our efforts.

We must be guided by the ambition that has been set for the Navy, and judged by our achievements on operations.

I am convinced that if we do these things, and do them well, then we cannot fail.

Thank you.

[Speech: Coping with Russia](#)

I'm delighted to be here tonight to accept Sir Hew's invitation to return to my alma mater and speak on the topic of Russian Resurgence.

I'm sure it would make Professor Christian, who led the Russian department in my day, proud to see it ranked first in the UK for Teaching, Quality, and Experience. It forms a principal plank in the bridge between British and Russian academia. Scholarship, culture and history have always brought Britain and Russia together.

In recent times we've seen renewed interest in Russian scientific and

artistic achievement. Last year saw the Cosmonaut exhibition at the Science Museum. This year the Royal Academy focuses on Russian art.

However, you'll be relieved to hear that I'm not about to launch into a lengthy discourse on Russia's artistic renaissance. Rather my focus is Russia's military resurgence – our response to which is a key factor in the formulation of our defence policy.

Resurgence isn't really the issue. Every nation has the right to compete on the global stage. The danger comes when that behaviour becomes aggressive.

President Trump has spoken about the need for engagement with Russia – he's right.

Great nations like the US and Russia will talk. Indeed, they must talk to preserve the rules based international system underpinning our security and prosperity. The UK too needs to engage with Russia, including military to military.

Yet President Trump is a realist. He knows engagement is an equation of risk versus reward with the outcome decided by a nation's deeds not its words.

So this evening I hope to offer a sober assessment of Russia's recent actions, our response as a leading member of NATO, and the prospects for the future.

CLEAR-EYED ASSESSMENT

Let me begin with Russian behaviour.

We are all familiar with its principal theatres of involvement – Ukraine and Syria.

I was in Ukraine two weeks ago and, as this month marks three years on from the events leading to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, it's instructive to reflect on what's happened since.

In February 2014, President Yanukovich fled Ukraine in the wake of the Euromaidan protests.

The Ukrainian Rada elected an interim president and prepared for fresh presidential elections – won, in May 2014, by Petro Poroshenko.

But Russia did not allow Ukraine to decide its own destiny like any other sovereign country.

Instead, under the guise of ambiguous and deniable instruments it annexed Crimea.

Similarly deniable tactics were tried in the Donbas before it was forced to resort to sponsoring militias and deploying conventional forces.

A nadir was reached in June 2014 – two days after I became Defence Secretary

– when MH-17 was shot down killing, 283 passengers, ten of them British.

Yet despite an inquiry showing that the plane was shot down by a Russian provided missile, Russia denied it and continues to do so.

Since then, in the Donbas, almost 10,000 people have been killed and nearly 1.5 million displaced. Despite the Minsk Agreements and successive ceasefires, the conflict not only continues, but also intensifies.

Ordinary people suffer as the ceasefire is violated every day while Russian land mines and artillery take their toll. In January the US Mission to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) mission identified over 238 weapons in separatist-held Miusynsk, including over 40 multiple launch rocket systems.

So to Russia's second theatre – Syria. Its intervention in September 2015 was not to target Daesh terrorists but to shore up the ailing Assad regime – demonstrated by 80 per cent of its air strikes being conducted against non-Daesh targets.

Since then Russia has targeted the Syrian opposition in Aleppo with little regard for innocent lives.

Yet Russian efforts have not been confined to Syria and Ukraine, nor limited to military means. Russia's doctrine advocates co-ordinating multiple instruments – military and non-military – as part of a hybrid approach.

Snap exercises

A favoured technique is the use of “no-notice” exercises, often of very large formations.

OSCE rules state that when the number of troops equals or exceeds 13,000 they are subject to notification and observation.

But Russia has managed to avoid tripping the 13,000 threshold for a mandatory observation since the dissolution of the Soviet Union despite annually boasting of exercises more than a hundred thousand strong. In 2016, the Kremlin said 12,500 troops were to be involved in its summer exercise (called KAVKAZ). Later Russia bragged that ten times as many took part.

Critically, these snap exercises are frequently held near international borders with every intent to intimidate.

Hybrid

Another feature of Russian activity is the elevation of what Churchill called the “terminological inexactitude”, to an art form.

There is a special Russian word for this.... Not “maskirovka”...the old deception perpetrated by its intelligence agencies...but “vranyo” where the listener knows the speaker is lying, and the speaker knows the listener knows he is lying, but keeps lying anyway.

Last year we saw Russia dismissing the Dutch forensic report into MH-17. Having first denied the plane was shot down – it used third parties to blame Ukrainian air-to-air missiles or US drone strikes.

Meanwhile Russia labelled the independent inquiry into the murder of Alexander Litvinenko in London – which found Russia responsible – a “theatre of the absurd”.

The Swedish Institute of Strategic Studies revealed Russia’s use of a “wide array of active measures” – including fake news – designed to “frame NATO as an aggressor and military threat, the EU as in terminal decline, and Russia as under siege from hostile Western governments.”

In his year of exile 43 years ago Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote “In our country the daily lie is not the whim of corrupt nature, but a mode of existence.”

Today we see a country that in weaponising misinformation has created what we might now see as the post-truth age.

Cyber attacks

Finally, there is the use of cyber weaponry to disrupt critical infrastructure and disable democratic machinery.

France knows this. In April 2015 TV5Monde was taken off air by a group calling itself the Cyber Caliphate. French investigators suggested the Kremlin was behind the cyber-attack.

Months later Germany was targeted too. Its lower house of parliament’s network was shut down by a hacker group the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV) said was “steered by the Russian state.”

What is concerning is that in 2016 we saw a step change in Russian behaviour.

In April, the Dutch referendum was targeted. A Washington Post journalist noted, “Many of the no campaign’s themes, headlines and even photographs were lifted directly from Russia Today and Sputnik.”

In October, Bulgaria was subject to what President Plevneliev called “the most heaviest and intense cyber attack...conducted in south-east Europe...an attack on Bulgarian democracy...conducted with a high probability from Russia.”

The Office of the Director of National Intelligence found that Russia targeted the US Presidential election and that its “intelligence services conducted cyber operations against targets associated with the 2016 US presidential election, including targets associated with both major US political parties.”

And Russia involved itself in Montenegro’s sovereign affairs. On 16 October, Parliamentary elections were held but overshadowed by the arrest of 20 Serbian nationals – accused of planning attacks on state institutions. The Montenegrin investigation showed the attempted coup was organised by two

Russian 'nationalists'. Montenegro has never been considered part of Russia's near-abroad. It is, however, about to become a NATO member.

Meanwhile, the Head of the German BfV intelligence agency warned the Kremlin is "seeking to influence public opinion and decision-making processes" ahead of this year's German elections.

RUSSIA TESTING THE ALLIANCE

What should we make of this persistent behaviour?

Russia is clearly testing NATO and the West.

It is seeking to expand its sphere of influence, destabilise countries, and weaken the Alliance. It is undermining national security for many allies and the international rules-based system.

Therefore it is in our interest and Europe's to keep NATO strong and to deter and dissuade Russia from this course.

It hopes to stay below the threshold for response.

But we must be clear-eyed in exposing its actions and calling on all NATO members to recommit to strengthening our collective defence.

It's vital we demonstrate NATO is as essential to peace now as it was then. President Trump is 100% backing NATO and Europe needs show that it does too. 19 of the 28 EU member states don't spend 1.5% of GDP on defence; five (and by no means the poorest five) don't spend 1%. After we leave, EU countries will pay only 20% of NATO's bills.

So he is right to challenge NATO to raise its game. All members need to step up to ensure NATO fulfils its role as the cornerstone of the West's defence as effectively as possible.

That means, not five, but all members making a step change by meeting the 2 per cent commitment. We're doing that, others need to too.

It means supporting reform to make NATO more agile, resilient, and better configured to operate in the contemporary environment including against hybrid and cyber attacks.

Cyber defence is now part of NATO's core task. NATO must defend itself as effectively in the cyber sphere as it does in the air, on land, and at sea. So adversaries know there is a price to pay if they use cyber weapons.

Alliance members are strengthening their capability, collectively and individual, to resist any form of attack. The UK is playing its part by almost doubling our investment on defensive and offensive cyber capability to £1.9 billion.

Above all it means accepting that we need to commit our forces to defend other nations. Public support for NATO requires political leadership; it

places a duty on us to keep making the case for the Alliance and to keep explaining its obligations.

Multinational institutions need commitment, reform and leadership to command loyalty.

Ultimately Britain's national security rests on NATO's security.

That is why I deplore the Leader of the Opposition's failure to support the deployment of British troops to Estonia and Poland – and Article 5.

By contrast, the government is responding in three ways to the testing of NATO and the challenge to the international order:

1. NOT BUSINESS AS USUAL

First, by showing that Russia's actions cannot be regarded as business as usual.

Our hope was to have a partnership with Russia that recognised nations' pursuit of their self-interest within the framework of the rules-based international order.

But Russia has chosen to become a strategic competitor of the West.

So realism must be our watchword, with guarded engagement. As the Prime Minister put it in Philadelphia – “engage but beware.”

There is nothing inevitable about a retreat to the days of the Cold War.

Russia can take a different approach

But, as the new US Defense Secretary, Jim Mattis, said: “I'm all for engagement, but we also have to recognize reality in what Russia is up to.”

Part of our response is for NATO and the West to do more to tackle the false reality promoted through Soviet-style misinformation. Whatever else we do on deterrence and dialogue we must counter Putin's Pravda with a faster truth.

A lie can travel half way around the world while the truth is putting its boots on.

We need to call out messengers like RT and Sputnik. In 2015 Ofcom sanctioned RT for broadcasting content “either materially misleading or not duly impartial” regarding Syria and Ukraine. It is beyond irony that one of those programmes was called “Truthseeker”.

2. REINFORCING DETERRENCE

Second, we are reinforcing our deterrence.

Deterrence is often associated with nuclear weapons. But it applies across the spectrum from peace to war. It's about ensuring that any potential adversary recognises that any benefits they may seek to gain by aggression

will be outweighed by the consequences for them of its actions.

The United States and the European Union imposed sanctions following Russia's action in Ukraine. They have weakened the Russian economy. This is the price it pays for its actions and by making that link it will deter them from similar actions in the future. Those sanctions remain in place today.

At the same time, NATO has responded to Russia's behaviour with unity and resolve – with Britain having a leading role.

Following the Wales Summit in September 2014 the Alliance established its Very High Readiness Joint Taskforce – which the UK leads this year – to react in short order to security challenges.

At the Warsaw Summit in July 2016, NATO agreed to establish an Enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe.

British troops will soon deploy to Estonia and Poland as part of that presence.

No one, save Sputnik, could pretend these measures are anything other than proportionate and defensive – Britain's contribution is 950 troops.

But where we deploy battalions, Russia deploys whole divisions...tens of thousands of troops.

Whereas their deployments seem designed to intimidate, ours are designed to reassure allies – especially those most threatened by Russian behaviour. They show that we stand by our partners and reaffirm that an attack against one NATO member would be considered an attack against all.

We also support greater cooperation between NATO and the EU to ensure we can deter coordinated hybrid attack using military and non-military levers.

Have these measures constrained Russian activity?

We can't prove a negative. But many feared Russia would push further into central and southern Ukraine.

So let's not rule out the possibility that overwhelming international condemnation, sanctions, and above all the bravery Ukrainians, gave the Kremlin pause for thought and dissuaded it from embarking on a wider conventional war.

3. DIALOGUE

My final point, something both President Trump and his new Secretary of State understand, is that deterrence and dialogue go hand in hand.

So we've kept our channels of communication open. This year marks the NATO Russia Council's 15th anniversary. Communication remains vital since, as our experience during the Cold War taught us, understanding is crucial even when trust seems in short supply.

We need to understand Russia better, and vice versa, because the risk of miscalculation is real.

December saw the passing of Thomas Schelling, noble prize winner...who devised the hotline between the White House and the Kremlin during the Cold War.

He understood that, while nations will always disagree on some subjects, to hold dialogue hostage would be folly since its value lies not just in preventing miscalculation, not just in stopping the ignorance and isolation but in opening up fresh opportunities.

Earlier I spoke about the future prospects for Russia/UK relations.

They are not as bleak as painted.

We had shared interests with the Iran nuclear deal.

Even in Syria where we disagree on so much we are deconflicting flights in a highly congested airspace.

And we have common regional and global concerns such as in Afghanistan, Islamist terror, and we all stand to gain by limiting weapons proliferation.

As a student here in the 70s, during the Cold War, I believed the Soviet Union would never change. Fifteen years later it did. It came about through the steadfast refusal of President Reagan and Margaret Thatcher to go along with the prevailing orthodoxy of quiet appeasement. It came too from the resilience of ordinary people, carrying messages beyond the Iron Curtain and linking hands across the Berlin Wall.

Last year our nations remembered our great Arctic convoys coming to Russia's aid in its hour of need and turning the tide of war.

Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and Tempest were performed by the Pushkin Drama Theatre in Moscow.

And Tim Peake shared a tiny capsule a Russian cosmonaut and US astronaut.

These interactions offer some hope for the future.

If the opportunities are out there to improve engagement Britain will do so – from a position of strength.

We accept that Russia with its vast geo-strategic span, like any major power, has legitimate interests

But we cannot accept the trading away of our interests and values or the continued violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity and interference with the freedoms enjoyed by Eastern Europe.

Instead of weakening global stability, it's time to strengthen the security architecture that guarantees the international rules based system.

And above all we must not accept as any kind of new normal Russia's

propaganda, whether overt or covert; its easy disregard for hard facts and numbers; or its blatant distortions and evasions.

On the contrary, we must continue calling Russia out on its activities, judging it on its deeds rather than words. As Bulgakov warned us: "The tongue may hide the truth but their eyes – never."

CONCLUSION

So there you have it. A clear eyed assessment of Russian behaviour.

We've seen a persistent pattern of behaviour that is becoming more pronounced.

We hope that Russia changes tack.

That it abides by the Minsk agreements, curbs the reckless military activity, and ditches the misinformation.

If it does, then there is the potential for a better relationship.

Russia could again become the partner the West always wished for. We could dare to hope that, to quote Bulgakov again, "everything will turn out right, the world is built like that."

[News story: Royal Marines Future "Secure" in Scotland](#)

Sir Michael's announcement came as he watched a battle demonstration at Arbroath as 45 Commando begin training to play a lead role in NATO's Very High Readiness Group from 2018. This will see them working and training with allies, and place them at the forefront of an international emergency should any arise.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon said:

Our Royal Marines are at the heart of Britain's global role as we do more to support our NATO allies. Their future in Scotland is secure, with those based at Arbroath deployed on ships all around the world as well as working with our European partners to tackle illegal immigration in the Mediterranean, which helps save lives and keep our United Kingdom safer and more secure.

On the visit, Sir Michael Fallon awarded two Royal Navy ranks serving with 45 Commando their Long Service and Good Conduct Medals (LSGC). Petty Officer

(Chef) Ian Dixon and Petty Officer (Medical Assistant) Jamie Jackson received their medals in recognition of having maintained perfect military records for 15 years. The men are originally from Lancashire and Derbyshire.

Earlier this month 45 Commando led 400 of their fellow commandos from the Royal Marines' three main fighting units into the snow and sub-zero temperatures of the Scottish Highlands as they honed winter warfare skills ahead of deploying to northern Norway. In Scandinavia, the Marines can expect temperatures as low as -30°C , much colder than the -12°C experiences on the slopes of the Highlands.

The other Royal Marine presence in Scotland is 43 Commando who are based at Her Majesty's Naval Base (HMNB) Clyde where they protect the UK's independent nuclear deterrent. Both units are part of the Royal Navy's elite amphibious infantry who are ready to deploy at short notice both at home and overseas.

45 Commando

- In addition to 650 commandos, 45 Commando employs 30 MOD civilians.
- The unit moved to Arbroath and RM Condor in 1971 after spending much of the 1950s and 60s deployed.
- Their 1982 Falklands Campaign saw major action with the capture of Two Sisters Mountain, which shaped modern Commando, mountain and cold weather warfare.
- The Unit deployed to Iraq in 2003 on Operation TELIC 1, and to Afghanistan on various Operation HERRICK deployments in 2006, 2008, 2011 in Sangin, Nad Ali and Helmand Province.

Defence Budget

- The UK is investing £178bn in a decade long equipment programme.
- The UK Defence budget has a "double lock" which ensures that it will rise every year by at least 0.5% annually, above inflation and always exceed 2% of GDP.

UK

- The UK Government is firmly committed to the future of Defence in Scotland and its continued vital role in Defence.
- Scotland is home to military bases that provide essential capabilities

for the Defence of the UK as a whole.

- By 2020, Scotland will be home to all of the Royal Navy's submarines, one of the Army's engagement and resilience Infantry Brigades, one of three RAF fast jet main operating bases and new P8 Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft.