

Press release: Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement units in the West bank

From:

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Minister for the Middle East Tobias Ellwood statement on the Israeli Government's announcement to build 2,500 settlement units in the West Bank.

Foreign Office minister, Tobias Ellwood, said:

The British Government reiterates its support for a two-state solution leading to a secure Israel that is safe from terrorism, and a contiguous, viable and sovereign Palestinian state. We have consistently been clear that settlements are illegal under international law, are not conducive to peace and their construction must stop. We condemn the increased pace of settlement activity.

Further information

News story: Welsh Secretary visits DECA, the North Wales home of the global F-35 hub as UK's Industrial Strategy Announced

As the UK Government launched its new industrial strategy, Alun Cairns took the opportunity to highlight the major contribution defence industry makes to the economy in Wales, as well as across the whole of the UK.

In November 2016, the UK was chosen to become the global repair hub for F-35 avionic and aircraft components, securing thousands of highly skilled jobs and millions in investment, with the potential to unlock more than £2bn of

future F-35 support revenue over the lifetime of the programme. Mr Cairns viewed the future F-35 facilities and met senior figures from DECA, apprentices, local small businesses, and Joint Venture partners BAE Systems and Northrup Grumman.

Alun Cairns, Secretary of State for Wales, said:

The decision to house the F-35 global repair hub in North Wales is testament to Wales' international reputation for technology and manufacturing. DECA Sealand and companies like Airbus show that this part of Wales is now a leader in aviation technology. The fact Wales is producing the next generation of army fighting vehicles in Merthyr shows we offer a highly skilled workforce and locations that work for business.

The industrial strategy is a plan for everyone; every sector and business in Wales has a stake in it. By pulling together we can build a Welsh economy that works for everyone supported by well-paid jobs for our young people.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon, said:

Britain's selection as a global maintenance and repair hub for F35s is a vote of confidence in our high-tech defence industry, generating billions of pounds for the UK and creating thousands of jobs.

But we want to do more through the industrial strategy to build on our strengths and get every part of the country, including Wales and North West England, firing on all cylinders.

Backed by our rising defence budget, a £4.7bn increase in R&D funding and Defence's £800m Innovation Initiative, we are determined to make the UK one of the most competitive places in the world to innovate, build business and help deliver security.

The government's Industrial Strategy will seek to make fresh choices about how the UK shapes its economy and presents an opportunity to deliver a bold, long term Industrial Strategy that builds on strengths and prepares for the years ahead.

With over 3,000 aircraft expected to be in service with 12 nations, the F-35 represents a truly international programme and supply chain, including in the UK, with British companies providing approximately 15% by value of every F-35 to be built.

The government will develop this strategy further with industry and ensure the UK remains one of the best places in the world to innovate and do business. Following a period of consultation, the government intends to

publish an Industrial Strategy white paper in 2017 that will set out the plan for full and long term delivery.

News story: UK and US strengthen maritime aviation cooperation

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin today signed a P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) declaration with her United States counterpart, Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work to further strengthen the uniquely close defence relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 2019 the UK will receive delivery of its first Poseidon P-8A aircraft and both nations have committed to deepen their defence cooperation when operating in the North Atlantic region. Through seeking opportunities to share logistics and support bases and optimise the use of P-8A aircraft, particularly in Europe, the declaration should ensure increased value for money and operational effectiveness.

Minister for Defence Procurement Harriett Baldwin said:

The United States is our pre-eminent Ally in global defence and collective security. This declaration is further evidence of how our two countries continue to cooperate and build mutual security, particularly in the North Atlantic region.

Backed by a rising defence budget and a £178 billion Equipment Plan, the P-8A programme will provide us with enhanced surveillance capabilities.

As leading members of NATO, the UK and US are committed to the collective defence of each other and their Allies. We have also pledged to deepen defence cooperation, bilaterally and within the Alliance, to further improve the ability to operate together in exercises and operations.

The declaration provides a new opportunity to maximise value for money for the taxpayer and continue to strengthen UK-US interoperability and to pursue efficiencies in operations and support, including at RAF Lossiemouth in Scotland, where the P-8A will bring some 400+ jobs. The Department of Defense and Ministry of Defence plan to cooperate closely on operation of their P-8A aircraft in the North Atlantic to ensure a coherent approach to MPA activity.

Delivering on the commitment of the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, the UK is purchasing nine Boeing P-8A Poseidon MPAs to be based in

RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland. The aircraft will add to the UK's surveillance capabilities, including conducting anti-submarine and anti-surface warfare, search and rescue and intelligence gathering.



Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin meeting Bob Work in September 2016

Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work said:

Today's signing of the Declaration on P-8A Poseidon Bilateral Cooperation exemplifies the importance and strength of the US-UK partnership.

This cooperation agreement ensures and deepens our interoperability and maritime patrol capabilities. Together, the US and UK will continue to deter regional threats and maintain a robust military posture.

With the first P-8A aircraft due to arrive in the UK in 2019, the RAF has ensured that we have maintained the skills needed to operate these MPAs through the 'seed-corn' programme, which has embedded former RAF MPA operators within the MPA squadrons of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA.

Air Commodore Ian Gale, Senior Responsible Owner for the Poseidon P-8A programme, said:

This agreement will enhance the UK's maritime patrol capability and further strengthen UK-US defence relations. The arrival of the Poseidon P-8A in 2019 will provide the UK with significantly increased capabilities and bring hi-tech employment to Scotland and the wider UK.

This agreement follows Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon's [recent visit to Norway](#), where he also committed to cooperate on Maritime Patrol Aircraft operations, ensuring that the UK will continue to play a key role in delivering collective maritime security across the globe.

Tory Health Minsters should be acting to address the challenges on the costs of care – Barbara Keeley

Barbara

Keeley, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Social Care, commenting on an investigation by the Health Service Journal and Disability United, which reveals that Clinical Commissioning Groups are drawing up new restrictions governing care for older and disabled people, said:

"It is deeply worrying that thousands of vulnerable people could be forced to move into care homes against their will just because that is a cheaper option than living at home.

"Evicting older or disabled people from their homes due to decisions about the cost of their care is unacceptable. This could also affect people who need care at home at the end of their lives.

"Tory Health Minsters should be acting to address the challenges on the costs of care. The Government must ensure that the NHS and social care has the funding it needs."

Press release: Zika virus, superbugs and arthritis targeted through £26 million fund

Sixty seven projects will win a share of £26 million funding available through [Biomedical Catalyst 2016](#), which is run by Innovate UK and the [Medical Research Council](#), and aims to develop innovative healthcare technologies and processes.

For the first time, Scotland's economic development agency [Scottish Enterprise](#) have also invested in projects. They have provided additional funding to seven Scottish companies, securing local support for nationally competitive innovations.

Funded projects

- Glasgow-based [SAW DX](#) will create 'ultrasonic holograms' to diagnose sexually transmitted infections much quicker than the current tests allow.
- The [Native Antigen Company](#) from Oxford are developing a quick and easy test for Zika virus, which differentiates the virus from Dengue Fever and hopes to provide reassurance to millions of mothers-to-be who live in tropical countries.
- Cambridge based [Cell Guidance Systems](#) have developed a way to use protein from silk worms to heal cartilage and potentially reduce the need for joint replacement in people with osteoarthritis.
- [Micropharm](#), from Newcastle Emlyn in West Wales are using antibodies produced by sheep to develop a treatment for antibiotic resistant 'superbugs', such as *Chlostridium difficle*.

Supporting the announcements, Chief Executive of Innovate UK Dr Ruth McKernan said:

Our biosciences sector, supported by the Biomedical Catalyst, is a fantastic example of the UK's joined-up innovation ecosystem in action. Our excellent researchers develop new and novel treatments and procedures that are then commercialised by our world-class businesses.

By becoming a co-funder in the Biomedical Catalyst, Scottish

Enterprise will be helping to bring together Innovate UK's national expertise in innovation with their own specific local priorities to boost local and national economic growth.

Sir John Savill, Chief Executive of the Medical Research Council said:

The Biomedical Catalyst is an important collaboration between the Medical Research Council and Innovate UK and we are pleased with the impressive results from the initiative to date. This unique partnership is clearly valued by both academia and industry – as evidenced by this latest investment from Scottish Enterprise.

Julia Brown, Director of Life and Chemical Sciences at Scottish Enterprise added:

We're working hard to create more opportunities for Scottish businesses to secure business innovation funding. This first-of-its-kind partnership with Innovate UK and the Medical Research Council is just one way we're achieving this, while integrating our support with our partners to generate more impact for the Scottish economy.

I'm pleased to see seven Scottish life science companies winning funding to support their innovative healthcare products, which demonstrates Scotland's thriving life sciences industry and our long established reputation for creativity and business innovation.

The Biomedical Catalyst partnership between Innovate UK and the Medical Research Council has provided funding for 384 projects that have led to more than 60 first-in-human studies for innovative products. The programme has also helped bring more than £1 billion of additional investment into the UK bioscience sector.

In Autumn Statement 2016, the Chancellor Phillip Hammond announced £100 million of additional funding to extend and enhance the Biomedical Catalyst to support life science companies and translate cutting-edge medical technologies into commercial success.