

## **Joint Statement on Enhanced Defence Cooperation between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and New Zealand**

1. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (UK) and New Zealand's close and enduring partnership is rooted in shared history, rich people-to-people connections, common values and a commitment to global peace and stability. Our last formal expression of defence cooperation was made in 2015. Recognising the world has changed, in April, Prime Minister Starmer and Prime Minister Luxon committed to renewing our historic defence partnership to make it fit for the future, and to deepen cooperation in our defence capabilities and industries.
2. Today, the UK's Secretary of State for Defence John Healey, and New Zealand Minister of Defence Judith Collins KC reaffirm their commitment to modernising the partnership and enhancing our bilateral defence cooperation. As the global security landscape has become increasingly volatile, our nations have responded with increases to defence spending and comprehensive defence reviews that share a common understanding of the threats that we face and emphasise the necessity of close collaboration with key partners.
3. Recognising the indivisibility of the security and prosperity of the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions, we will continue to shape our defence cooperation within a regional security context, ensuring alignment with broader strategic priorities. We will:
  - Cooperate to enhance security and stability, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.
  - Enhance combined effectiveness in operations through interoperability.
  - Facilitate effective defence industrial and technology collaboration.
4. Through these efforts, we will continue to build a defence partnership that contributes to the security and prosperity of both nations now and into the future.

### **Strategic Context**

5. The world is facing the most challenging and dangerous strategic environment for decades, with growing Russian aggression, intensifying strategic competition in the Indo-Pacific, ongoing tensions in the Middle East and challenges posed by emerging technologies.
6. This is challenging the international rules-based order, leading to increased regional and global tensions and raising the prospect of military confrontation. At the same time, rapid technological advances are changing the character of warfare.
7. In Europe, state conflict has returned with Russia using military force to achieve its goals. Its ongoing and illegal war against Ukraine demonstrates a blatant disregard for international law and the principles of state sovereignty and territorial integrity enshrined in the UN Charter.
8. In the Indo-Pacific, there is an intense contest of narratives, values, and ambitions for regional and global influence. We are witnessing unprecedented military build-up, often without reassurance or transparency, with the uncertainty this generates exacerbated by hybrid or grey-zone threats – especially in the maritime and cyber domains. The risk of military miscalculation and escalation is on the rise.
9. Through the Boe Declaration on Regional Security, Pacific countries affirmed that climate change remains the single greatest threat to the livelihoods, security and wellbeing of the

people of the Pacific. The Pacific region is experiencing more frequent and intense weather events and is vulnerable to natural hazards. These can be drivers for severe humanitarian disasters and present economic risk. This will likely require more frequent military support to civilian-led disaster responses in the future and drive the need to operate safely in more extreme weather conditions. The UK and New Zealand commit to continuing to address the security implications of climate change. We will continue to collaborate to deepen our mutual understanding and to take action to meet shared challenges.

10. As close partners, we will work together in support of a secure, stable, and prosperous world. We will do this bilaterally and by strengthening regional partnerships and cooperation.

### **Strengthening our Partnership**

#### **Shared Objective 1: Cooperate to enhance security and stability, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region**

11. The UK and New Zealand partnership contributes to both regional and global security, through bilateral collaboration and collective security through a network of partnerships. We will work together to address regional challenges and to shape the global security environment. This includes continued investment in regional frameworks such as the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), and our partnership through our respective relationships with NATO. We are committed to cooperating across all domains to ensure our defence forces remain interoperable and adaptable to emerging challenges.
12. We will defend international rules and norms through the strengthening of regional partnerships and upholding rights and obligations under international law, in particular the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea. We will continue to cooperate in support of freedom of navigation and overflight, including through participation in combined activities.
13. In the Euro-Atlantic, the UK's unshakeable commitment to NATO is central to its defence and security strategy and New Zealand's partnership with NATO reflects its wider commitment to supporting global stability and security.
14. In the Indo-Pacific, continued commitment to the FPDA will play a crucial role in fostering cooperation and enhancing interoperability. By working collaboratively, the UK and New Zealand aim to contribute to regional security and stability.
15. In the Pacific, the UK and New Zealand affirm the centrality of Pacific-led responses to regional security challenges. To support this, New Zealand and the UK will continue to explore opportunities to work alongside Pacific Island Countries to support their interests through defence activities.

#### **Shared Objective 2: Enhance combined effectiveness in operations through interoperability**

16. The UK and New Zealand reaffirm our unwavering support for Ukraine's self-defence, its sovereignty, and territorial integrity. We commit to continued coordination on military training support to meet Ukraine's evolving needs and on potential post-conflict assistance.

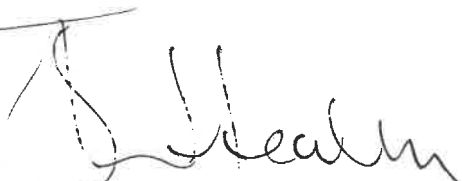
17. Both nations recognise the importance of security and stability in the Pacific and are committed to enhancing regional security and resilience through coordinated activities and shared expertise. This includes countering illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (C-IUUF), potentially deploying hydrographic survey teams and combined training teams. The presence of UK Armed Forces in the Indo-Pacific further strengthens this cooperation, and we commit to working closely on the planning and execution of deployments that enhance maritime security in the region.
18. The Royal Navy and the Royal New Zealand Navy maintain a strong and enduring relationship, underpinned by complementary training and systems that maximise interoperability, as exemplified through New Zealand's participation in the UK's Carrier Strike Group deployment this year. A deeper partnership between our navies will remain a key focus, supported by a renewed Maritime Strategic Framework that will drive collaboration in priority areas. Our navies will advance alignment across the areas of personnel, training, operations and the adoption of new technologies, to ensure both navies remain effective in addressing shared security challenges.
19. The British Army and New Zealand Army relationship is strong and historic. It is fostered through common Exercise programmes including the FPDA, longstanding exchanges and collaborative efforts in critical technological innovation. Our Armies are committed to modernisation and experimentation through collective opportunities such as the Project Convergence Capstone series, and from lessons emerging from respective national contributions to the Drone Capability Coalition in Latvia. Closer interoperability between our Armies will be pursued through the ABCANZ Armies programme.
20. We commit to maintaining the 88-year long relationship between the Royal Air Force and Royal New Zealand Air Force. This relationship is demonstrated today through personnel exchanges in areas of common capability, including on P-8A Poseidon and T-6C Texan II aircraft, plus the continued enduring Ex LONGLOOK which provides opportunities across all professions. These activities enhance interoperability through increased understanding of strategic, organisational, and operational issues, common to both air forces.
21. Space continues to play a critical role in advancing global security, innovation and collaboration. As members of the Combined Space Operations Initiative, Multi-National Force - Operation OLYMPIC DEFENDER, and Joint Commercial Operations, New Zealand and the UK have a shared interest in keeping space secure and sustainable. As the UK delivers the first ground station for its sovereign Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance constellation, both countries will continue to explore opportunities for cooperation on satellite communications (SATCOM), ground stations, and subject matter expert exchanges, while continuing to share learning from experience and test data. We commit to exploring new areas of cooperation to meet respective national interests in the Air and Space domains.
22. We are committed to maximising opportunities to train together, whether bilaterally or through multilateral exercises such as those conducted under the FPDA. These activities, alongside combined operations, exchanges, and professional military education placements, play a vital role in enhancing interoperability, trust, and mutual understanding between our personnel. We should pursue opportunities to move beyond interoperability towards greater interchangeability where appropriate.

**Shared Objective 3: Facilitate effective defence industrial and technology collaboration**

23. The strategic context means that the maintenance of a robust and resilient industrial base, to protect national interests and mutually support our allies, is critical. We are stronger together, working alongside one another to identify common military requirements and collaborating on capabilities and sharing perspectives on supply chain resilience. Supporting our respective strengths will reinforce our collective capabilities and strengthen our Defence Industries to make Defence an engine for growth.
24. As New Zealand and the UK look to grow and add resilience to our respective defence industrial bases, we commit to fostering people to people linkages and visibility of opportunities between defence enterprises under our respective Defence Industry Strategies.
25. Deepening cooperation in science and technology is a key enabler to rapidly advancing cutting edge military capabilities and increasing our Armed Forces' lethality.
26. The launch of UK Defence Innovation and the establishment of the New Zealand Defence Force Technology Accelerator provides an opportunity to accelerate the development and delivery of innovative solutions to meet urgent requirements. This includes advancing drone capabilities, and leveraging new technologies with joint efforts pursued through existing multilateral forums where these priorities are addressed. It also creates opportunities to meaningfully explore deeper partnerships on shared areas of interest and concern, and to take collective action to strengthen our defence forces.

**Managing Bilateral Defence Cooperation**

27. This Joint Statement on Enhanced Defence Cooperation and our Defence Policy Talks provide a framework to regularly review, update and adapt our bilateral defence partnership. We also commit to holding meetings between the UK Secretary of State for Defence and the New Zealand Minister of Defence at least once a year, including on the sidelines of major defence forums, and more frequently as appropriate.
28. We commit to holding annual Defence Policy Talks to review regional and global security developments, align strategic priorities and guide associated single-service policy talks.
29. Through shared objectives, regular high-level defence visits and exchanges, and cooperative activities, we will ensure that our relationship remains responsive and aligned with our shared strategic priorities.
30. As we face an increasingly dangerous world, by renewing and broadening our partnership across the Defence landscape we will be more resilient, adaptable and capable through our deepened relationship together.



**The Right Honourable John Healey MP**  
**Secretary of State for Defence**  
**The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**



**The Honourable Judith Collins KC MP**  
**Minister of Defence**  
**New Zealand**