

UK defence industry steps up support for Gulf partners facing Iranian attacks

18.3.2026 - | Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

The UK today stepped up its support for Gulf partners, convening a meeting of defence industry leaders to reinforce countries in the region under attack from Iran.

- UK industry explores potential new support for regional allies under indiscriminate attack from Iran.
- Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry Luke Pollard and National Armaments Director Rupert Pearce bring together representatives from 13 key UK-based defence companies to meet Gulf ambassadors and defence attachés.
- Comes as UK intends to buy further Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM), manufactured by Thales in Belfast, to supply to British forces and support partners in the region.

The UK today stepped up its support for Gulf partners, convening a meeting of defence industry leaders to reinforce countries in the region under attack from Iran.

The meeting was convened by Luke Pollard, Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry, and saw representatives from 13 key UK-based defence companies meeting Gulf ambassadors and defence attachés to explore new industry support for regional allies. The Defence Secretary, John Healey MP, and Foreign Office Minister for the Middle East, North Africa, Afghanistan and Pakistan, Hamish Falconer MP, joined the session to emphasise the urgency of this work.

It comes as the MOD confirmed that the UK intends to buy further Lightweight Multirole Missiles (LMM), to supply British forces and support partners in the region, including with training in the UK where needed.

Lightweight Multirole Missiles, manufactured by Thales UK in Belfast, have already proven highly capable for air defence in the Middle East.

The discussion focused on potential new defensive equipment and technology that British-based companies could supply at rapid pace to allies to counter Iranian drone and missile attacks.

UK industry representatives from both established primes and innovative new firms attended alongside ambassadors and defence attachés from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Iraq and Jordan.

Defence Secretary, John Healey MP said:

Iran's indiscriminate attacks are a threat to Britain, our allies and our partners in the region. That's why our dedicated Armed Forces are taking defensive action in the Middle East.

A nation's Armed Forces are only as strong as the industry that supports them. I'm proud of how our military and industry is stepping up together - just as we are for Ukraine - to offer rapid support to our Gulf partners. This is the best of our British industry, innovators and military in action.

Minister for Defence Readiness and Industry, Luke Pollard MP said:

As Iranian attacks against our partners in the Gulf continue, the UK is stepping up our support - both military and industrial. We are committed to defending British people, interests, and partners across the region.

This event showcases a new approach: actively pulling in allies and industry to drive the pace on the defence kit the Middle East needs. We are bringing in British expertise to help our partners, removing barriers, and championing innovative UK-based industry.

It comes as the UK and Ukraine agree a new world-leading partnership to boost global defensive capability against the proliferation of low cost, high tech military hardware, including drones.

Defence industry representatives included leaders from:

- ADS
- MARSS
- MSI
- MBDA
- Frankenberg
- Leonardo UK
- Thales
- QinetiQ
- OSL Ltd
- BAE Systems
- Ocean Infinity

- Cambridge Aerospace
- Uforce

Representatives present also received briefings from Ministry of Defence officials on the current strategic situation in the region and the UK Government's response to the crisis.

The Ministry of Defence, through the National Armaments Director (NAD) Group, is working to speed up financing and licensing for exports to Gulf partners. As part of this, a new Task Force has been created within the NAD Group to collaborate across government to support partners across the Middle East working with UK industry. It will also manage the impact of the conflict on the UK defence supply chain and gather requirements for stock replenishment.

This is just the start, and the NAD Group will seek further opportunities to build on today's event by continuing to work closely with industry partners and Gulf states.

Note to editors:

- All industry stakeholders present were selected due to their strength in offering capabilities such as air defence, counter-drone systems, and command and control software which could be rapidly exported to countries in the region.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-defence-industry-steps-up-support-for-gulf-partners-facing-iranian-attacks>