Strategic Defence Review 2025, the United Kingdom updates its defense: "Security at home, strength abroad"

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London, June 3, 2025 – The British government has published the **Strategic Defence Review 2025**, a document that marks a radical change in the strategic and operational vision of national defense. The key message is clear: the world has changed, and the threats the United Kingdom must face today are more serious and unpredictable than at any other time since the end of the Cold War.

According to the report, the United Kingdom is called to face a war on the European continent, increasing Russian aggression, new nuclear risks, and continuous cyber attacks. Alliances between hostile actors are becoming tighter, while technologies — from drones to artificial intelligence — are profoundly changing the way of fighting.

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Towards an integrated and combat-ready force

The Review marks the shift to a posture of “**war fighting readiness**”, meaning full combat readiness, thanks to an integrated, more lethal and technologically advanced force, and a strengthening of national territory defense. Among the main innovations:

- A **new hybrid Navy**, which will include up to 12 nuclear-powered attack submarines and conventional armament (through the AUKUS program), new warships, transformed aircraft carriers, and autonomous naval units.
- An **enhanced Army**, with advanced armored capabilities, swarms of ground drones, long-range weapon systems, artificial intelligence, and combat software. The number of full-time military personnel will be increased to at least **76,000** in the next Parliament.
- A **modernized Royal Air Force**, with new F-35s (both B and C versions), upgraded Typhoons, next-generation jets under the GCAP program, and autonomous fighters.

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Technological innovation inspired by Ukraine

The lessons learned from the war in Ukraine will guide British innovation. The United Kingdom will double investments in autonomous systems and by 2027 will activate a new digital targeting system with a budget of up to **1 billion pounds**. A national **Drone Centre** will also be established to accelerate the adoption of military drones.

Defense will also be an **engine of economic growth**:

- **6 billion pounds** will be invested in ammunition by the end of the legislature, with at least six new factories on British soil.
- The **continuous submarine production program** will create new attack units and thousands of new jobs.
- **400 million pounds** will be allocated to support national businesses in the defense sector, while a new **Export Office** will guide growth in foreign markets.

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European defense and nuclear deterrence

The United Kingdom reaffirms its centrality in NATO with the policy of “**NATO First**”, strengthening conventional and nuclear capabilities:

- The first **European hybrid air groups** will be created, integrating fighters, drones, and long-range armaments aboard aircraft carriers.
- With nearly **1 billion pounds**, the first **European directed energy weapon** (laser) will enter service.
- Up to **7,000 long-range missiles** will be produced, with a positive employment impact estimated at around 800 jobs.

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Society and national resilience

The review also introduces a **holistic vision** of security:

- Over **7 billion pounds** will be dedicated to the renewal of military housing, with at least **1.5 billion** allocated to housing for armed forces families.
- Youth programs will be enhanced (+30% cadets by 2030) and a **voluntary sabbatical year** for young people will be introduced.
- A new **Strategic Reserve** will be established, and the Navy will take a leading role in protecting underwater infrastructure.
- A **Defence Readiness Bill** will be presented, a law to strengthen national preparedness in case of crisis.

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The Prime Minister's commitment

In presenting the review, Prime Minister **Keir Starmer** reiterated the government's commitment to bring defense spending to **2.5% of GDP by 2027**, with the ambition to reach **3% in the next legislature**, subject to economic and fiscal conditions.

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