

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Cyprus

The Secretary of State for Defence (The Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP): In a written statement on 24 May 2011, (Official Report, columns 49WS-50WS), my predecessor the right hon. Member for North Somerset (Dr Liam Fox) informed the House that, further to the Strategic Defence and Security Review, a separate review of the British Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus would be undertaken.

The study has been completed. The Government accepts its recommendations and confirms Her Majesty's Government's enduring commitment to the Sovereign Base Areas in Cyprus. The key considerations in affirming this commitment were:

The Sovereign Base areas are in a region of geo-political importance and high priority for the United Kingdom's long term national security interests.

The Sovereign Base Areas provide an adaptable and capable forward mounting base, the utility of which has been amply demonstrated: for example, the basing of RAF aircraft that participated in operations over Libya; the regular deployment of Cyprus-based military personnel to Afghanistan; and the key role played as a logistic hub for operations in Afghanistan.

In addition, the Sovereign Base Areas are expected to make a significant contribution to logistic drawdown from Afghanistan, as well as to wider humanitarian and conflict prevention activities in the region. They also continue to provide excellent training opportunities in this important region.

The Strategic Defence and Security Review 2010 emphasised the fundamental importance of an "ability to remain adaptable for the future". The Sovereign Base Areas provide the United Kingdom with a unique contribution to our ability to achieve this goal.

Our military personnel, United Kingdom civilians and locally employed personnel in the Sovereign Base Areas make a major contribution to the national security of the United Kingdom and will continue to do so in the future. In administering the Sovereign Base Areas, the United Kingdom will continue to have as its main objectives - the effective use of the Areas as military bases,

maintenance of a constructive and cooperative relationship with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus, and protection of the interests of those resident or working in the Areas.

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