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For immediate release

“Vital” UK industry launches Defence Matters

Aims to show importance of industry to UK security & economy

The UK-based defence industry has today (Thursday) launched an initiative aimed at informing the public and politicians of the importance of the sector especially in terms of its support for Britain's armed forces, its economic contribution and in keeping the country safe.

Defence Matters - www.defencematters.co.uk - seeks to raise the profile of the industry to ensure that the issue is given more importance in the consciousness of the public and politicians as well as provide facts and figures to enable an informed debate to take place. Defence companies will use the Defence Matters logo and website on their advertising campaigns in future to drive more people to the website.

Ian Godden, Secretary of the Defence Industries Council, said:

“The UK-based defence industry is an unknown success story to most people in Britain but it is a vital sector for the nation. Over 300,000 people work across all regions of the UK to deliver world-leading equipment for the UK armed forces. This equipment also delivers a positive contribution of around £9 billion a year in balance of payments terms via exports to Government-approved overseas customers - demonstrating the quality of our products.

“We are immensely proud of the support and equipment we provide to the UK's Armed Forces and we want more people to know about this. Few people are aware that we have developed technology to keep our armed forces safe through innovations such as the radar on the new Type 45 destroyers that can see an incoming object the size of a snooker ball from 12 miles away or new systems to allow helicopter pilots to see through sand to detect hostile fire.



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"As politicians seek to re-balance the economy with more support for manufacturing and engineering, defence has to be a sector requiring their attention. In addition, today's globalised defence market sees us competing with other industries for skilled employees and with defence companies based in other countries for work. As the commitments the UK's armed forces face at home and overseas evolve, the UK defence industry has to ensure that we are in the best possible position to support their work."

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Notes to Editors:

1. For more information on the new initiative and website, as well as the UK defence industry, please go to www.defencematters.co.uk. Defence Matters is supported by the Defence Industries Council, the collective voice of the defence industry in the UK. Through Defence Matters we aim to raise awareness of the UK defence industry, in particular the work we do for the Armed Forces, and the contribution we make to the UK's security and economy.
2. The £9 billion trade figure is sourced from MoD figures at <http://www.dasa.mod.uk/modintranet/UKDS2008/c1/table114.html>.
3. The Defence Industries Council works to promote the interests of the defence sector and raise wider awareness of defence industrial issues. The UK Armed Forces' ability to respond quickly to emerging operational threats depends on its national technology and industrial base. The UK defence industrial base produces world class equipment and is internationally competitive but its continued health is dependent on the relationship with Government as its primary customer and regulator. Today's investment in defence technology provides the capabilities our Armed Forces need for the future and enriches the national industrial and technology base for the benefit of the entire economy.



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4. The trade association members of the DIC are the British Naval Equipment Association, the Defence Manufacturers' Association (DMA), Intellect and the Society of British Aerospace Companies (SBAC). Membership of the DIC is on a rotational basis and currently comprises senior executives from Babcock, BAE Systems, BVT, Chemring, Finmeccanica, Kembrey Wiring Systems, QinetiQ, Rolls-Royce, Serco and Thales. For more information on the DIC please go to <http://www.sbac.co.uk/pages/53214663.asp>.