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UK Doubles Sky Sabre Air Defence Systems

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The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence has signed a £118 million contract to acquire six additional Land Ceptor medium-range air defence missile systems, strengthening the nation's security capabilities and doubling the number of deployable Sky Sabre systems.

The three-year agreement includes the missile launchers and essential supporting infrastructure, such as 12 fire-unit support vehicles, eight baggage vehicles, eight threat evaluation and weapon assignment systems, and spare parts. These systems will enhance the British Army's ability to intercept cruise missiles, aircraft, and drones, both domestically and in overseas operations.

Sky Sabre integrates radar, command and control, and missile launch systems, allowing it to engage up to 24 targets simultaneously. Its precision is demonstrated by its capacity to strike objects as small as a tennis ball travelling at twice the speed of sound.

This investment is expected to support around 140 jobs across the United Kingdom, particularly at MBDA's facility in Bolton, Lancashire, which already employs about 1,300 people. The facility is also undergoing expansion to meet future defence production demands.

The enhanced capability was demonstrated during Exercise Formidable Shield in the Outer Hebrides, marking the first live firing of Sky Sabre on UK soil. The system is also deployed in Poland as part of NATO's Operation Stifftail, contributing to the defence of the alliance's eastern flank.

Armed Forces Minister Luke Pollard MP said the procurement delivers on the Strategic Defence Review by equipping the armed forces with modern systems to protect UK territory,

forces abroad, and deter adversaries. Lieutenant Colonel James Boutle, Commanding Officer of the 16th Regiment Royal Artillery, described the Sky Sabre as a significant advancement in ground-based air defence, effective against fast jets, precision-guided weapons, and drones.

This acquisition represents both a defence and economic boost, reinforcing modern military capabilities while supporting British industry.