

Britain's Flagship Heads to USA Ahead of Autumn on European Operations



NATO Ambassadors observe an F-35 Lightning jet land on the flight deck of Her Majesty's Ship Queen Elizabeth, Nov. 22, 2021. *U.S. MARINE CORPS / Staff Sgt. Bryani Musick*

WASHINGTON – In the coming months, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be at the heart of a powerful task group made up of thousands of Sailors, up to 10 ships, F-35B Lightning jets, helicopter squadrons and Royal Marines Commandos which will operate across Europe this autumn, said Georgina Burros, chief communications officer for Global Issues for the British Embassy in Washington, D.C.

But the aircraft carrier will first deploy to the East Coast of the United States to undertake parts of HMS Prince of

Wales' deployment as its sister ship undergoes repairs.

"After a period of maintenance it is fantastic for the fleet flagship to be underway again to conduct operational activity with allies and partners," said Capt. Ian Feasey, HMS Queen Elizabeth's commanding officer.

The Royal Navy task force will work closely with allies and partners across Europe – from the Baltic all the way south to the Balkans and Black Sea region – over the coming months.

The operations are part of galvanized NATO efforts in the face of Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine to safeguard security, stability and prosperity across Europe. HMS Queen Elizabeth will primarily be focused on operations in the Baltic and work closely with forces from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden.

Together, these nations form the U.K.-led Joint Expeditionary Force, designed to react to crises whenever and wherever they unfold.

Before the operational phase of the deployment, HMS Queen Elizabeth will be in New York to host the Atlantic Future Forum, a conference that brings together the brightest minds and most influential thinkers from defense and beyond to strengthen U.K. and U.S. bonds.

Submarine-hunting frigate HMS Richmond will accompany the aircraft carrier across the Atlantic.

At the same time, the Royal Navy's Littoral Response Group is completing its final preparations before deploying to the Mediterranean to operate with NATO allies and partners in a region vital for European security.

The amphibious task group is made of more than a thousand Sailors and Royal Marines and will be led by HMS Albion.