

Defence firm seeks new work in world hotspots

by David Tooley

david.tooley@jpress.co.uk 01908 651319

A LUTON-BASED defence company is a trailblazer for others who are looking for business opportunities in the Middle East.

Titan Defence Services of King Street protects individuals, transport convoys and economic infrastructure in vulnerable areas across the world and last week was among 200 British companies in Dubai finding out about potential opportunities across the Middle East and North Africa.

Director Sulman Robert said: "The nature of our work means that Titan Defence already has a strong presence in the Middle East, having subsidiary offices in Jordan, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

"We have also been working closely with UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) over the past 12 months to identify future business opportunities.

"However, we are keen to use this conference to progress further. I want to learn more specifically about available contracts, across the Middle East, for the services and training we provide."

Businesses were able to meet with trade experts representing more than 18 markets from Algeria to Kuwait, Syria to Saudi Arabia.

UKTI trade advisor and champion for the Middle East Anton Rudgalvis said: "Titan Defence Services is another company which approaches this market in



UNDER GUARD: Titan Defence provide security for civilian personnel in volatile environments

the right way.

"Working with UKTI locally, as well as establishing links with British embassies and consulates across the Middle East, has enabled Titan to make important contacts and inroads into this rapidly growing market.

"They have reaped the rewards through taking the time and resources to build relationships – a crucial factor for making it in the Middle East."

Companies in Luton and Bedfordshire are being urged to consider the wealth of opportunities available in the Middle East – a region where markets are growing rapidly. In the first nine months of this year, UK exports of goods to the Middle East were worth £10.5 billion, up 17 per cent on this time last year.

Before taking up his post at UKTI, Vic Annelis, UKTI international trade director for the East of England, started several successful companies in

the Middle East which delivered, amongst other things, security equipment to companies in the Gulf States and Iraq, business support services across the Gulf region and postal/courier products in Kuwait.

He said: "There is a vast array of opportunities for Luton and Bedfordshire businesses to grow their sales in the Middle East and these opportunities are across the board. However, the right preparation needs to take place in order to be successful.

"If you are considering export to this region it is vital you find out about the people and their culture and research the place you wish to target. UKTI, through its local teams can help you do this.

"I would therefore urge you to get in touch with us and find out what's on offer."

Jeff Wilson, head of UKTI in Dubai said: "There are misconceptions about the Middle East and many businesses are fearful

of doing business here – this despite the fact that UK exports to the Gulf are worth more than exports to India and China combined

"It is true to say that things are done differently here.

"Arab business people want to get to know you as a person so they can trust you when doing business. In your first meeting you may not talk about business at all.

"My advice is therefore to invest company time and resources to build relationships, if you do this right you will reap the rewards."

Another Beds company that is reaping the rewards is food and drinks packaging firm Colpac, of Enterprise Way, Flitwick.

Overseas sales already make 35 per cent of the firm's business.

Following a food exhibition in Jeddah, supported by UKTI, the company won its first order from Saudi Arabia, then from Qatar.