

Foreign Secretary's visit to Toronto, Canada – 6 August 2019

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab:

Thank you very much Chrystia for your exceptionally warm welcome.

It's a huge pleasure and a privilege to visit Toronto on my second week as Foreign Secretary. As Chrystia's already said, it's our second proper bilateral. I hope that shows how much we prize our precious friendship with Canada and the Canadian people and how much we want to work on taking it from strength to strength in the future.

Canada is the only country who sits alongside Britain in NATO, the G7, the G20, the Commonwealth and the Five Eyes intelligence alliance.

Our friendship is based on the ties of history – language, culture and, above all, on shared values. Values which are inherent to our political systems but also the challenges we face globally.

Two months ago, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of D-Day in 1944, when the British and Canadian soldiers landed side-by-side on the very same beaches in Normandy. We think about the huge sacrifice made on all side in that noble cause and today Britain and Canada stand together as we will always do in defence of freedom and democracy.

We've got British troops leading NATO's deployment in Estonia; and next door, Canadian forces taking up that responsibility in Latvia.

Our countries speak out together when our ideals come under attack. As Chrystia mentioned, that is the case whether it's issues relating to Canadian nationals or Canadian interests but also UK interests.

Last month Chrystia joined my predecessor, Jeremy Hunt, to co-host a conference on media freedom in London and we're delighted to think about ways to strengthen it for the second round and I'm sure we will be talking about the detail of that. It is something we share and prize with Chrystia, and the Canadians.

Canada was a stalwart ally in our defence after the Russian nerve agent attack in Salisbury last year. We appreciated that solidarity and appreciate those moments when you stand shoulder to shoulder with us in defence of our shared values.

In the same way, we share Canada's concerns about the detention of Michael Kovrig and Michael Spavor in China. We discussed their cases today.

If you want to take a really great example of evidence of our relationship of trust, then take Canada's decision in February to choose the British Type 26 design for the new Canadian warship. We're really proud that that's going to

be a central part of the Royal Canadian Navy for decades to come.

We both benefit from thriving economic, commercial ties. We're looking for win-win out of investment and free trade. We've got Canadian pension funds that have invested £30 billion in UK real estate and infrastructure, including ports and airports. And UK experts are creating new partnerships in Artificial Intelligence, including right here in Toronto.

For our part, the UK is at an important historic crossroads and the Government is very clear that we will take the UK out of the EU on 31 October. We're doing that because there is a democratic verdict in the 2016 referendum that must be respected, whether or not we conclude a deal with the EU. Just to be clear and to reaffirm what the Government's consistent line has been, we might get and hope to reach agreement with our EU partners, but we will leave the EU in any event at the end of October.

With that in mind, we need to ensure that everything possible is in place to ensure continuity of trade after Brexit for the benefit of companies and consumers in both our countries.

Chrystia and I agreed on the need for seamless transition. We're going to be looking into taking that work forward with officials in our teams in the weeks ahead in the run up to the end of October.

I'm pleased to be able to say in Canada that, for the UK, Brexit is not just about risk management, although that's important and I wouldn't want to be glib or not take that very seriously. But it is also – and our Prime Minister has been very clear about that – also about grasping the enormous opportunities of our two countries.

Yes, we're going to remain good European neighbours, partners and friends in the future. But we do want to grasp those global opportunities, and we want to expand our horizons and raise our level of ambitions in the world.

As part of that we want to take our friendship with Canada and the Canadian people to the next level on trade, on security co-operation, on human rights, and on those global challenges that are beyond any particular region like tackling climate change.

That's why I've made this visit to Canada my first bilateral trip, one of my top and most immediate priorities, and I just want to say, thank you Chrystia. We really welcome the valuable relationship we've got with the Canadian Government.

Further information

NHS pensions for senior clinicians: new changes announced to improve care

The government wants to change pension rules for top doctors, surgeons and other high-earning clinicians to allow them to take on extra shifts and treat more patients without losing out financially.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) will shortly open a new consultation asking people what they think about the set of proposals, which includes giving senior clinicians full flexibility over the amount they put into their pension pots.

This replaces [the 50:50 proposal](#) put forward for consultation in July.

Starting from next financial year, the new rules would allow senior clinicians to set the exact level of pension accrual at the start of each year.

For example 30% contributions for a 30% accrual rate, or any other percentage in 10% increments depending on their financial situation. This would give them room to take on additional work without breaching their annual allowance and facing tax charges.

Employers would then have the option to recycle their unused contribution back into the clinician's salary.

The proposals follow the commitment made in the [NHS People Plan](#) to deliver a fairer and more flexible approach to the NHS Pension Scheme for senior clinicians.

Guidance will also be given to employers setting out how they can provide flexibility at a local level this financial year for clinicians to do extra work without breaching limits for pensions tax relief.

This will allow affected staff to opt-out of the NHS pensions scheme mid-year. Their employer will be able to use discretionary flexibility to maintain the value of the clinicians' total reward packages.

The NHS Pension Scheme is recognised as one of the most generous in both the private and public sector. But the tapered annual allowance means some clinicians can face tax charges. Around a third of NHS consultants and GP practice partners have earnings from the NHS that could potentially lead to them being affected by the tapered annual allowance.

Alongside the proposals for full flexibility, HM Treasury will review how the tapered annual allowance supports the delivery of public services such as the NHS. HM Treasury will continue to engage with the NHS, the British Medical Association (BMA) and other stakeholders as part of this process.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sajid Javid, said:

This government is committed to ensuring that British people see a real difference in public services, including getting quicker GP appointments and a reduction in waiting times.

Critical to that is introducing flexibility into the system so that our hospitals have the staff they need to deliver high-quality patient care, which is why we've listened to concerns and will be reviewing the operation of the tapered annual allowance. This will help to support the delivery of our vital public services.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock, said:

NHS doctors do extraordinary, life-saving work every day, and they should not have to worry about the tax impacts if they choose to go the extra mile by taking on additional work to help patients.

These comprehensive proposals will give doctors the pension flexibilities they have called for and need to make sure they are rewarded for extra work. We are taking immediate action and I hope these flexibilities will encourage our top NHS staff to fulfil the dedication of their mission: to care for their fellow citizens in time of need.

[UK Government's Chevening Scholarships for Argentina open](#)

Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals with demonstrable leadership potential who also have strong academic backgrounds. The scholarship offers full financial support for future leaders to study for any eligible master's degree at any UK university whilst also gaining access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experiences. You can apply to the scholarship at www.chevening.org/apply.

Since the programme was created in 1983, over 50,000 outstanding professionals have had the opportunity to develop in the UK through Chevening. There are more than 1,500 scholarships on offer globally for the 2020/2021 academic year, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment towards developing the leaders of tomorrow.

Head of Scholarships at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ben Coates, said:

Chevening represents the very best of the UK, welcoming exceptional

people from across the world to study, grow, and thrive at some of the world's best universities. Chevening can be a transformative experience, not just for the scholars, but for their communities and countries as they return and use the benefit of their UK experience to make a positive difference in their chosen field.

Our universities promote the creation and exchange of information and ideas, as well as the building of knowledge and networks. Chevening Scholars find themselves immersed in that world, and leave the UK after their studies having grown academically, professionally, and personally as a result.

Since the programme started in 1983, many of those selected for this scholarship have gone on to become respected leaders across a range of sectors. Being a part of the Chevening network instils a strong sense of pride and responsibility, I have seen this first hand and am consistently impressed by the passion and commitment of the scholars and alumni I meet.'

With our world facing countless challenges, the role that the Chevening community plays in building bridges and collaborating across borders to solve big issues is more important than ever.

Chevening's Head of Programme Management, Louise Thomson, said:

Chevening puts you in control of your experience. You can choose from over 12,000 master's courses at over 150 different higher education institutions. UK institutions consistently rank highly in global university rankings, so be prepared for an academically challenging and fulfilling experience.

We organise an exclusive programme of events and activities, enabling you to experience Britain's heritage and history, discuss international policy, and interact with thought leaders at a range of academic, cultural, and social events.

Recently, scholars have visited the UK prime minister's residence at 10 Downing Street, hiked up Mount Snowdon in Wales, exhibited art in London galleries, interned at the BBC, volunteered with the elderly, debated current affairs at the Cambridge Union, and sat in the home dressing room at Anfield. Some have even visited the locations where scenes from 'Game of Thrones' was shot. All this whilst studying on an intense master's course.

Chevening doesn't just open doors, it opens your mind. You will learn so much simply by interacting with people from all over the world, travelling around the UK in your spare time, and getting involved in the communities you live in. Those who get the most out of the experience are the ones who put the most into it.

With so much to learn and achieve, a year goes by faster than you

can imagine. But your time in the UK is only the beginning of a life-long journey as a part of an international community of changemakers. Our hope is that you will leave the UK inspired, motivated, and better equipped to bring your own ideas to life.

The British Ambassador to Argentina, Mark Kent, said about the scholarships:

Chevening scholars are incredibly diverse, so there is no 'typical' scholarship profile. That said, if you have leadership capacity and a clear vision of the future that you want to help build, it is very likely that you are compatible with our community of more than 500 former scholars of Argentina, who come from the most diverse provinces and cities from the country.

Our network of former fellows is full of dynamic and influential people who have shared the same experience and can offer encouragement, guidance, advice and contacts. Those who return to Argentina after their Chevening experience will feel able to start making a significant professional or social contribution.

There is much that can potentially be obtained by presenting a good application, so if someone has what it takes to be a Chevening Scholar, I encourage you to apply before the closing date, which is November 5.

The call for new applicants follows the selection of 25 scholars from Argentina, who won an award to study at a UK university this year. Successful applicants have been sharing their stories through the #ChosenForChevening hashtag on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

More information

Visit www.chevening.org/scholarships for detailed information on the eligibility criteria and scholarship specifications.

Chevening Scholarships are the UK Government's global scholarship programme, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organisations. The scholarships support study at UK universities – mostly one year taught master's degrees – for individuals with demonstrable potential to become future leaders, decision-makers, and opinion formers.

Chevening began in 1983 and has developed into a prestigious international awards scheme. Chevening Scholars come from over 160 countries and territories worldwide, and almost 1,800 scholarships were awarded in 2019/2020. There are over 50,000 Chevening Alumni around the world who comprise an influential and highly regarded global network.

The name 'Chevening' comes from Chevening House in Sevenoaks, Kent – currently the joint official residence of the UK's Foreign Secretary.

More information is available at www.chevening.org

Peru and UK to start double taxation agreement talks

Mark Menzies MP made the announcement as he represented the UK at the opening of the Lima 2019 Games

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On his third visit to Peru in less than two years, Mark Menzies MP, the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Argentina, Colombia, Chile, and Peru, celebrated over 5 days a number of milestones in the bilateral relationship between Peru and the UK.

Alongside Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra and Lima Mayor Jorge Muñoz among other dignitaries, Mr Menzies represented the UK at the spectacular opening ceremony of the Lima 2019 Pan American Games on 26 July to celebrate the UK's key role as Peru's main delivery partner. Peru and the UK signed a government-to-government agreement in 2017 to help the Lima 2019 Organising Committee deliver the games. The Pan American and Parapan American Games are the world's fourth largest sports competition and Peru's first time hosting an event of this size.

Earlier that day, Mark Menzies met with the Peruvian Prime Minister Salvador del Solar where they agreed to begin negotiations for a double taxation agreement in December 2019. This Agreement will provide greater legal security and reduce the cost of doing business between our two countries.

They also discussed progress on the Joint Infrastructure Task Force set up last year and future cooperation to improve public transport in Lima. Separately, Mr Menzies discussed future plans for collaboration with the new urban transport authority for Lima and Callao (ATU) to help tackle Lima's notorious traffic issues.

In his respective meetings with the Prime Minister and the Vice minister of Trade, Sayuri Bayona, Mr Menzies hailed the recently concluded free trade continuity agreement between the UK, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. The agreement was signed in Quito, Ecuador, on 15 May this year and will guarantee the continued free flow of goods between the UK and the Andean

countries regardless of the outcome of Brexit on 31 October.

Mr Menzies attended the opening ceremony of the Lima 2019 Games at the National Stadium alongside President Vizcarra and Lima Mayor Jorge Muñoz. Also representing the UK at the event were British Ambassador Kate Harrisson, DIT Managing Director & Chief Investment Officer, Michael Charlton, DIT Deputy Director, Kelly Allen, and DIT Lima Director Francine Torbett.

At a GREAT Global Sports seminar attended by future host nations including Chile, Mr Menzies focussed on the legacy of the Lima Games. He also celebrated UK culture at the Games' cultural exhibition space, including activities with Paddington bear and a Freddie Mercury impersonator, as well as information on Chevening and a Quidditch tournament. The Newton Fund in Peru organised a photo exhibition of its science and innovation projects in Peru.

Mr Menzies's visit marked a new chapter in Peru-UK relations as our countries continue to work towards an even greater partnership on key areas for our mutual prosperity.