

Speech: PM statement at press conference with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg: 21 June 2018

Prime Minister Theresa May:

Jens, it's a pleasure to welcome you to Downing Street today.

The range of issues we have discussed I think underlines why NATO is as vital now as it ever has been.

And why our commitment to the Alliance remains steadfast.

Not only do we exceed the NATO target of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence, but as we meet today thousands of our Armed Forces personnel are standing shoulder-to-shoulder with NATO allies around the world.

They serve alongside our Allies in Poland and Estonia to deter Russian aggression as part of NATO's "enhanced Forward Presence".

They are training and mentoring our Iraqi and Afghan partners to help them build a brighter and more prosperous future.

The Royal Navy has led half of NATO's Standing Maritime Forces for the past year and has declared our nuclear deterrent capability to the defence of the Alliance since 1962.

And Royal Air Force Typhoon jets stationed in Romania are patrolling the skies over the Black Sea as part of NATO's Southern Air Policing mission.

I am proud that whenever the call comes from NATO the UK is one of the first to respond.

But while we step up we cannot allow NATO to stand still.

So today the Secretary-General and I welcome the progress made on modernising NATO while recognising that there is more to do.

There has been much discussion about the need for Allies to take on greater responsibility by increasing their spending on defence and we welcome the steps that NATO Allies have taken since the Wales Summit four years ago.

Burden sharing will be one of the key items on the agenda for the Summit in July, where we will take stock of progress since the Leaders' Meeting last May and the Warsaw and Wales Summits.

Europe is shouldering more of the burden but must continue to do more.

And as the challenges we face evolve so must we, which is why another key

priority for the Summit will be making NATO more modern and adaptable.

Next month we expect to agree an ambitious package of measures to strengthen our deterrence and defence, to increase our efforts on tackling terrorism, and to address the threats presented by cyber and hybrid warfare.

Our values and our unity are the source of NATO's strength, but as an organisation of 29 based on consensus, there is a risk that we cannot always act as quickly as our adversaries.

So it is reassuring that NATO continues to adapt to ensure that it is less bureaucratic, better at prioritising its activity, and more capable of taking and implementing decisions quickly.

This work will include improving readiness to make sure that we have the right forces in the right place so that they can act to protect our people.

The UK already plays an important part in this by supporting the design of a new NATO Command Structure – and I'm proud to say that we'll be committing an additional 100 posts to that Structure taking our commitment to over 1000 UK Service personnel.

Finally, this is the first time that the Secretary-General and I have met since Russia's use of an illegal nerve agent in Salisbury.

We saw a powerful demonstration of the value of the Alliance in its response to this incident and I would like to thank the Secretary General for his and for NATO's support.

This act was the latest Russian provocation in a wider pattern of malign behaviour – cyber, disinformation, political subversion and increased military posturing.

We will continue to be at the forefront of those opposing Russia's malign activity and the abuse of the international rules-based system, but we remain committed to the NATO approach of deterrence and defence backed up by periodic and meaningful dialogue with Russia.

The message that I have conveyed to the Secretary-General today is that the UK will continue to lead by example in NATO, meeting the 2% target on Defence spending, contributing across the board to Alliance missions and operations and continuing to encourage all Allies to do the same.

[Press release: United Kingdom- Poland](#)

Quadriga Joint Communiqué

Today's annual meeting of Foreign and Defence Ministers demonstrates that the UK and Poland are delivering on their commitment to develop our partnership to be even stronger and even more strategic.

We took the opportunity of this meeting to celebrate the hundred years of Polish regained independence and a bilateral relationship that has vastly expanded over a century. During that time the UK and Poland have worked and fought side-by-side for freedom in Europe and the world. We remember the heroism of British and Polish soldiers, sailors and pilots throughout the Second World War and subsequent conflicts. Our countries have a strong trading relationship and deep cultural links through the thriving Polish community in the UK. We are active partners in international fora like the UN, OSCE, EU and NATO, and our troops serve together on the ground in Poland as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. Today we have discussed concrete ideas for how we can further enhance our strategic foreign, defence and security partnership.

As the hosts of the previous two NATO Summits, we share a deep commitment to the Alliance, and to a successful Summit in Brussels. NATO continues to adapt to the evolving security environment, having made good progress since 2014 in rebuilding and strengthening its Deterrence & Defence posture and Projecting Stability. The 2018 Summit is an important landmark in providing a modern, prepared and unified NATO. It will be an opportunity to review the progress made since Wales and Warsaw, demonstrate Allies' unity, and agree the remaining steps ahead of NATO's 70th anniversary in 2019. Ensuring the effectiveness of NATO's deterrence and defence, including in the Eastern flank, is of vital importance for both countries. Our partnership in the area of security and defence continues to serve that purpose. Against this background, Poland and the UK stand for a timely and successful adaptation of the NATO Command Structure.

Both the UK and Poland are committed to meeting the NATO target of spending at least 2% of GDP on defence, and 20% of that on major equipment capabilities. We recognise the importance of increased defence spending across the Alliance. We also fully support NATO's open door policy and the 2018 Summit offers an opportunity to recognise the progress made by aspirants, particularly as this year marks the 10th anniversary of decisions made at the Bucharest Summit. We recognize that Euro-Atlantic integration remains an important driving force of reforms in Georgia and Ukraine.

In order to build our collective capability to tackle hostile activity and hybrid threats, the UK and Poland will draw on the complementary experiences of NATO, EU and likeminded partners, ensuring a consistency in approach across multilateral fora to all forms of threats. We commit to strengthen resilience to Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear-related risks (CBRN), through practical cooperation including sharing information and lessons learnt. By coordinating the attribution of hostile activity in cyberspace and pushing for all available diplomatic tools to be used in

response to cyber-attacks, we will raise the cost of malicious cyber activities. We will also explore new areas of innovation, and seek to harness the commercial cybersecurity opportunities they afford, by facilitating an exchange of ideas and expertise between British and Polish businesses.

Our two countries will enhance our strategic communications and develop strategies to reinforce our democracies, strengthen our societies' resilience, and uphold freedom of expression and a free and independent media in the face of the disinformation threat. We will further continue to initiate joint actions aimed at supporting independent media in Eastern Partnership countries so as to build resilience to Russian disinformation and build plurality and balance across media landscapes. The UK and Poland will work together to tackle hybrid threats through NATO to improve crisis management, identify the tools available to hostile actors, and enhance resilience among NATO Allies and partners. The NATO-Ukraine Platform on Countering Hybrid Warfare can play an important role, and the UK and Poland will work to strengthen this instrument.

We remain committed to continuing our efforts aimed at stabilising the EU neighbourhood and handling various challenges on the Eastern and Southern flanks. The heightened risk from Russia and the bold pattern of its behaviour, designed to undermine the rules-based international order, concerns us greatly. We have worked hand-in-hand to shape Europe's response to Russian aggression against Ukraine and hostile action. Russia's hostility has seen it operating in more agile and asymmetric ways, be it the use of a nerve agent on the streets of Salisbury or cyber-attacks such as NotPetya in Ukraine. We agreed that the best response is to maintain pressure on Russia, including through sanctions, until the Minsk agreements are fully implemented and Russia abides by agreed international norms and standards.

Our discussions also focused on the dire situation in Syria, and we agreed to continue to champion urgent humanitarian access through the UN Security Council. We call on all parties to engage fully in the UN process in Geneva towards a credible political solution. We deplore the repeated use of chemical weapons by the regime and will use the special session of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention later this month to reinforce global norms and work towards a new attribution mechanism for chemical weapons incidents. We also discussed Iran and, whilst remaining concerned about Iran's ballistic missile programme and regional behaviour, we shared a desire to maintain both the JCPOA and Transatlantic unity. The UK and Poland continue to be close partners in the Council on numerous issues, and plan to host a joint event in New York later this year.

We reaffirm our shared commitment to the security, stability, prosperity and sovereignty of all six countries in the Western Balkans. The UK and Poland will continue our close cooperation in preparation for the 2018 and 2019 Berlin Process summits. In particular, we will explore joint projects and activities on priority themes, which include countering corruption, and resilience against disinformation and the malign activity of external actors. Foreign Ministers will make a joint visit to the region between our Summits. This will ensure continuity between the British and Polish Berlin Process summits as well as a lasting, positive impact in the Western Balkans region.

Alongside our foreign and security policy collaboration, we also agreed to deepen our bilateral defence cooperation. In December 2017 we signed a defence treaty that will elevate our bilateral cooperation in the areas of information exchange, collective defence, intelligence and technologies, military exercises and investment planning. In the past year we have also made steps in the development of bilateral capability collaboration projects. The Defence Capability and Industrial Dialogue has been supported by Ministerial and senior official engagement, and we will continue to discuss opportunities for both British and Polish companies.

We have signed the Plan for Bilateral Defence Cooperation for the year 2018, and continue to deliver these commitments; working together across a full range of activities, including in such thematic areas as enhanced interoperability of forces, promoting defence industries' collaboration as well as bilateral visits and exchanges.

The UK and Poland continue to respond jointly to shared threats and hostile state activity. This includes leading discussions in multilateral organisations such as the Northern Group. This year, we both participate in two large scale exercises, SABER STRIKE and ANAKONDA 18 demonstrating the strength of our military cooperation and enduring commitment to Euro-Atlantic security. We are determined to participate in exercises aimed at restoring NATO's ability to conduct large combat operations, including in the Eastern flank.

Press release: United Kingdom- Poland **Quadriga Joint Communiqué**

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concerns us greatly. We have worked hand-in-hand to shape Europe's response to Russian aggression against Ukraine and hostile action. Russia's hostility has seen it operating in more agile and asymmetric ways, be it the use of a nerve agent on the streets of Salisbury or cyber-attacks such as NotPetya in Ukraine. We agreed that the best response is to maintain pressure on Russia, including through sanctions, until the Minsk agreements are fully implemented and Russia abides by agreed international norms and standards.

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security. We are determined to participate in exercises aimed at restoring NATO's ability to conduct large combat operations, including in the Eastern flank.

Speech: Matt Hancock speaking at the Dynamo Conference in Newcastle

It is fantastic to be here in Newcastle.

Tomorrow I will be launching the Great Exhibition of the North, a celebration of everything that is great about the North of England.

This is a unique opportunity to celebrate the exceptional creativity here and to inspire the next generation of innovators.

The Exhibition will feature 80 days of events, looking ahead to the economy of tomorrow and the role that the North of England is playing in shaping our future.

And we cannot think about the future without thinking about technology.

Technology really is transforming everything.

Netflix has transformed broadcasting, Airbnb has transformed the hotel industry. And in January, I transformed politics in West Suffolk through launching the Matt Hancock app...

In fact the combined user base of Netflix, Airbnb and the Matt Hancock app is now over 300 million...

I like to live and breathe technology and that is why I really wanted to come here to today's Dynamo Conference.

Last week was London Tech Week and we were talking a lot about how the UK is a digital dynamo.

We are a nation of pioneers, and the truth is that we have out to the West in the United States, and out to the East in China, two tech giants.

And our role is to be the best in our timezone, to be the best in Europe and to be one of the best places in the world for tech.

The prosperity that comes from this technological revolution, and the success that underpins it, can only happen and is only worth shouting about, if the benefits can be shared right across the country.

So I wanted to talk about what we're doing to support digital dynamos like

you in the North East and all across the country.

The North East

It is a critical goal of our Digital Strategy to make sure that the considerable benefits of our tech industry get outside of London.

This is also true also in our creative industries. I am delighted to be working with Channel 4 who are creating a new National HQ outside London, bringing real benefits from what they do.

Nearly 70 percent of investment in the UK tech industry last year was outside the capital

The North East has played a huge part in that. And it has played that part through history.

From Stephenson's first railways to the incandescent lightbulb and of course the industrial heritage here.

Now in the modern era, it is home to the 30 million pound National Innovation Centre for Data, which opened last year to harness the power of data.

Newcastle is home to 30,000 digital and tech jobs – and it is the fastest growing tech economy outside of London.

The North East is home to some of the UK's tech powerhouses, like Sage, our second largest technology company.

And then we have some exciting new tech firms. Tomorrow I'm seeing True Potential in Newcastle, which is the only UK fintech firm to have been in the Deloitte Technology Fast 50 for three consecutive years.

This is all boosted by the research universities in Newcastle and Northumbria. And from strong support networks like our hosts today here at Dynamo North East.

But the point is that when you have the second largest tech company in the country, the fastest growing area and 30,000 tech jobs there is something special going on. We want us to support it and see it grow.

Talent and skills

There's a couple of other things I want to mention which I think are critical to making this happen. The first is talent and skills.

The task here is to make sure that we keep getting the brightest and the best from around the world and also that we do much more to support our home grown talent.

We have put in place something called the Digital Skills Partnership.

The aim of this partnership is to improve the digital capability that is needed right across the country.

And building local partnerships to tailor digital skills training to the needs of the local community.

The point of the Digital Skills Partnership is this. If we in Government try to solve the skills shortage in tech on our own we will get it wrong. We will be training people with outdated capabilities and we will do far less than needs to be done.

The Digital Skills Partnership, yes, has Government at its core and we convene it. It has universities and academia, but it also has the companies that are the beneficiaries of this tech talent as part of the partnership.

And we launched just last week the second of these local partnerships and there's plans for four more across England later this year.

We're working with North East and Tees Valley LEP to see how we can develop a new partnership here and I really want this to become a reality.

The private sector has a critical role to play in making this happen. Tech firms are showing great leadership on this issue.

For instance, the North East Futures UTC has got the backing of local companies like Ubisoft and national companies like Accenture.

That's going to open its doors this year on the site of Stephenson's original railway workshop.

It's only by delivering the skills that businesses need that we're going to get this right.

The recent Tech Nation report showed that skills was the biggest concern for tech firms in Newcastle and Sunderland. And we are determined to tackle the problem but we need to do it in partnership.

Conditions for starting and growing a digital business

The next thing I want to touch on is make sure we get the conditions right.

We have a key objective in making our country the best place in the world to start and grow a digital business.

Of course part of this is the old style physical infrastructure, but also the modern infrastructure and connectivity.

Almost five million extra homes and businesses have been connected to superfast broadband thanks to the Government's investment.

And at 97.2%, the North East has the highest coverage of superfast broadband in the country.

And we're now looking at the next frontier, at the 5G and the full fibre rollout, where we have invested over a billion pounds.

And we're working with local authorities, here and across the rest of the

country, to make sure that we get that rollout going.

A strong digital infrastructure is vital to power the next generation of emerging technologies, especially those heavily reliant on data like AI.

And then there's access to finance, which of course is vital to companies in their early stages of development.

Just last week we announced £2.5 billion of extra funding by the British Business Bank, to unlock over £10 billion of finance and support new UK businesses in their ambitions to grow.

It will invest alongside private capital because we want to make sure the investment goes to places with a good business case.

The networks for ambitious entrepreneurs, Tech City UK and Tech North, have also recently evolved into Tech Nation.

This isn't just a rebranding but reflects our commitment to supporting tech pioneers wherever they are based.

Tech Nation will support 40,000 entrepreneurs and up to 4,000 start-ups as they scale their businesses across the country.

And along with this work, we want to connect British businesses across the UK with potential investors and partners across the world.

Hedgehog Lab, with its headquarters in Newcastle, is breaking ground in AR and VR, and now has offices in Denmark, India and the USA.

I want all firms to have these opportunities.

And then we're expanding a range of tech hubs between the UK and different countries, based in embassies, to make sure that when people go abroad there are the connections and meeting points.

We launched our first one in Israel and since then we have launched another in India. And we'll be launching more hubs in Brazil and South Africa to help tech companies go global.

For example, as part of the Indian hub, the North East will be linked to Karnataka, the home of the Indian Space Research Organisation and several hi-tech manufacturers.

Looking forward

So with all the new technology in development, we are clear that there is a role for us in Government to help this great industry to grow right across the country.

To make sure we get the infrastructure, the skills, the finance and the business support in place.

The North East was pivotal to the first industrial revolution.

Some call this the fourth industrial revolution and I am absolutely determined to do what I can to help you to be pivotal to this one too.

Focusing together on the skills and the conditions for technology to thrive, to shape our society and our economy for the better.

I think it's a very exciting opportunity and I look forward to working with you to make it a reality.

Thank you very much.

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