

Speech: “United Kingdom set out three steps which, if taken, would improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions”

Thank you Mr President, and thank you for convening this important meeting. I would also like to thank Madam Keita for her briefing.

United Nations peacekeeping operations play a critical role in containing and reducing conflict, often in the most challenging circumstances, such as in Mali and South Sudan. There are many examples of the effectiveness of these missions. There are also, unfortunately, examples of the sacrifices that individual peacekeepers make, as we were reminded by the outrageous attack that killed 15 Tanzanian peacekeepers earlier this month.

Today we have been briefed on the persistent gaps that remain in peacekeeping operations. We do not always have the right capabilities, equipment and trained personnel to deploy and deliver the demanding mandates that this Council sets.

We must do more to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of UN peacekeeping. This will enable us to better manage the conflicts where peacekeepers are deployed and better protect civilians caught up in conflict as well as the peacekeepers that take up this crucial role.

To achieve this we must invest in the UN’s force generation process. There have been significant improvements to this process, but more needs to be done.

When this Council last discussed force generation, the United Kingdom set out three steps which, if taken, would improve the effectiveness of peacekeeping missions: deployment innovation, improved mission performance, and better long-term planning and strategic force generation.

Today, I want to update the Council on the UK’s actions to support these three areas.

Last year we trained more than 11,000 troops from some 30 countries to prepare them for deployments to UN missions, including UNMISS, MONUSCO, MINUSCA and AMISOM.

Support has ranged from instructor and leadership training through to assistance with the planning, conduct and delivery of national pre-deployment training for Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries.

In addition, we continue to support mandatory e-learning pre-deployment training for all troops to prepare them to respond to and prevent sexual exploitation and abuse.

The Women Peace and Security Chiefs of Defence Network which we launched alongside Canada and Bangladesh in November is a critical tool to strengthen training and capacity building on gender throughout peacekeeping and at all levels.

We have also provided over \$800,000 in extra budgetary funding to the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations and Field Support.

The UK now has over 700 personnel deployed on 8 UN missions operating in 7 countries. These include 380 troops in South Sudan, 40 in Somalia, and 280 in Cyprus.

And we have embraced “smart pledging” which was raised by my Minister of State for Defence at the Vancouver Defence Ministerial. This innovation will enable us to better meet our obligations through a coordinated response with partners. For example, through our deployment to UNMISS, we are working with Vietnam, the USA and Australia, to provide a field hospital in Bentiu, South Sudan, which ensures the provision of medical care for peacekeepers.

But coordination needs to go further.

Firstly, we must collect performance data and use this to better understand and focus our limited resources to where training and capacity building are most needed. We must coordinate our collective efforts more.

Cooperation should be expanded to cover leadership, gender integration, protection and victims’ support.

Secondly, we must see more partnerships and more smart pledges. We need to develop mechanisms that match those that can provide equipment and technology, specialist skills and personnel, or logistical support. Smart pledges will help plug the persistent gaps.

Finally, we must consider the non-military components of peacekeeping. We must support capacity-building work carried out by Individual Police Officers and Specialised Police Teams. This supports recovery and creates long-term stability. And we must consider how we can generate the civilian component so that missions do not just keep the peace, but build and sustain it as well. Wider work on management reform has a role to play. Crucial civilian posts must not remain unfilled.

We all recognise the positive impact peacekeepers have worldwide. We ask them to take on enormous challenges to protect the most vulnerable. We must do our utmost to improve the systems that support them. We owe this to the brave women and men who serve under the blue banner.

Thank you Mr President.

Speech: “Instability in Afghanistan inflicts tremendous suffering on the Afghan people. The international community can help to change this”

Thank you Mr President.

And I would also like to thank the Secretary-General and Special Representative Yamamoto for the latest report on the situation in Afghanistan. And of course to all our briefers.

As the Secretary-General’s latest report acknowledges, Afghanistan continues to face many challenges to its peace and stability.

However it is important to recognise the significant progress that has been made. 6.4 million children now attend school, the country has a democratic government, and Afghan Security forces are fighting to protect their fellow citizens.

We remain committed to supporting the Afghanistan people on their path towards peace and prosperity bilaterally and through the United Nations. The UK is spending up to \$1 billion by 2020 to support the Afghan Government’s work to improve security, quality of life, and access to education.

Mr President, I will take this opportunity to focus on three important elements of peace building in Afghanistan: the holding of timely elections, the Afghan led peace process, and the protection of human rights.

Firstly credible, inclusive and timely elections are essential for long-term stability. We remain committed, with the international community, to supporting the Afghan government’s delivery of parliamentary and district elections in 2018. We call upon the government and the electoral management bodies to deliver the elections the Afghan people deserve.

Mr President there is no purely military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. The only viable option for achieving lasting peace and stability is an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. The Taleban must choose to engage with this.

We welcome the actions taken by the United Nations, including by the Secretary General and Special Representative, to act on the recommendations in the strategic review of the UN Mission in Afghanistan. This recognised the importance of placing peace efforts at the forefront of the UN’s work.

The Kabul Process for Peace and Security Cooperation will convene its second meeting in early February, and we call on all parties to engage constructively with the Afghan Government through this process to give Afghanistan the best hope of achieving peace.

It is also encouraging that human rights remain an essential part of UNAMA's mandate and I thank SRSG Yamamoto for highlighting the UN's work to support the meaningful participation of women in the upcoming elections.

In that regard, I would like to thank Ms Wazhma Frogh for her compelling briefing, and pay tribute to her many years of tireless activism in support of women's rights in Afghanistan. Her invitation to brief the Security Council today demonstrates the importance we place on these issues.

The UK is supporting Afghanistan to prevent violence against women and girls, improve girls' education and ensure women's full participation in political and economic life. We are also mentoring the trainers of future female leaders at the Afghanistan National Army Officer Academy.

The Council's adoption of Resolution 2344 ensures Women Peace and Security considerations remain at the heart of the UN's work in Afghanistan. And we welcome the Afghan Government's work so far on its National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security and urge them to ensure its full implementation.

With Afghanistan's recent election to the Human Rights Council, on which we congratulate them again, we look forward to working with them to promote and protect human rights around the world, including through the fulfilment of their own international human rights commitments.

Looking ahead to next month, we fully support Kazakhstan's decision to prioritise Afghanistan and central Asia during its Presidency of the Council. We look forward to working with Kazakhstan, Council Members and regional and international partners, to support the efforts of President Ghani and his government to build peace and security with a particular focus on regional connectivity and sustaining peace.

Instability in Afghanistan inflicts tremendous suffering on the Afghan people. The international community can help to change this. If we work together, the people and Government of Afghanistan can build the harmony and prosperity which have been inaccessible for so many decades.

Thank you Mr President.

News story: The Troika statement on South Sudan

This statement was issued jointly by the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Norway.

On Thursday 21 December, the parties to the conflict in South Sudan signed the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, Protection of Civilians, and

Humanitarian Access in Addis Ababa.

The members of the Troika (Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States) congratulate the parties on their willingness to compromise for the benefit of the people of South Sudan and hope that they immediately take action to make good on that agreement. The Troika fully supports the continuing effort by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) to build peace through the High Level Revitalization Forum (HLRF).

We would like to recognize in particular the meaningful contributions of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa Faki, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, Hailemariam Desalegn Boshe, and the members of the IGAD Council of Ministers. We further recognize the tireless work undertaken by IGAD Special Envoy Ismail Wais and the High Level Facilitators to bring the parties together and the inclusion of a number of civil society organizations and women representatives at the Forum.

The Troika calls on all the parties to implement the Agreement immediately including the parties' obligations regarding humanitarian access. We are encouraged by the strong statements from the African Union and IGAD making clear their intent to hold the parties accountable. The Troika calls on the parties to reconvene urgently to address the important security and governance arrangements that are essential for peace.

[News story: Business Secretary visits Poland to foster deeper economic collaboration](#)

- Business Secretary met senior Polish ministers who heard more about how the government is rolling out its modern Industrial Strategy.
- UK and Poland agreed to work more closely on developing economies fit for the future, with science and innovation at their heart.
- Both governments agree to develop clean energy solutions to take advantage of the transition to a low carbon economy.

Business Secretary Greg Clark has travelled to Poland to meet senior ministers to discuss the government's ambitious Industrial Strategy and to build on UK and Polish efforts to develop a more strategic partnership.

During his visit, the Secretary of State discussed a range of issues, including the UK's Industrial Strategy, UK-Polish co-operation on climate-friendly clean energy solutions, and science and innovation.

As part of the UK and Poland's commitment to work together more closely on developing competitive economies, the UK announced that 2018 will be a UK-

Polish Year of Entrepreneurship, Science and Innovation. This will include a UK-Poland Science Forum in September 2018, a joint-research workshop series, and developing the Warsaw-London Bridge start-up collaboration programme to bring together start-ups and potential investors in the UK and Poland.

After the visit, Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Our ambitious Industrial Strategy puts research and innovation at its heart and the 2018 UK-Polish Year of Entrepreneurship, Science and Innovation will help us build on our great strengths in this vital sector.

Poland is an important partner in building the conditions for growth and innovation, and the government is keen to strengthen our co-operation both now and in the future. Working together on clean energy solutions, science and entrepreneurship, we will help to create prosperous, ambitious economies in both Poland and the here in UK.

As part of his visit, the Business Secretary took the opportunity to discuss the UK's Industrial Strategy at a round-table event involving several top business representatives. The government's ambitious vision for the future, laying out how the UK plans to tackle the productivity challenge, earn our way in the future and improve living standards, was showcased to Polish NGOs, CEOs of big businesses and heads of business federations.

Further building on the growing links in science, education and research, the UK and Poland agreed to a Clean Growth Dialogue to develop climate-friendly clean energy solutions. This dialogue will include:

- The development of nuclear technologies, with a focus on potential joint funding for research and development of high temperature nuclear reactors and the launch of a workshop to coordinate Co-operation on Small modular Reactors (SMRs) and a Nuclear Energy Solutions Forum;
- Continued dialogue on EU Energy Policy to build on the excellent co-operation already shared by the UK and Poland; and
- Joint projects to develop Smart Energy and strategies to tackle climate change in the run up to COP24 next year, hosted by Poland.

Notes to editors:

[Number 10 press release about the Prime Ministers visit to Poland](#)

News story: PM press statement in Poland: 21 December 2017

Our ties with Poland are rooted deeply in our shared history.

We will never forget the Polish soldiers who fought with our troops in North Africa and on mainland Europe in World War II, nor the Polish pilots who braved the skies alongside us, standing up for freedom and democracy in Europe.

And we value the significant contribution made by so many Poles in our country today.

So I am in Warsaw today to ensure that we can work even more closely together to ensure the security and prosperity of our nations in the years ahead.

Our annual dialogue demonstrates the common ground we share, the importance we attach to our bilateral relationship and the benefits it brings.

We share a clear commitment to elevate our cooperation and firmly establish the UK and Poland as resolute and strategic allies in Europe.

Our defence and security cooperation is already strong, but we have gone even further today in signing a landmark joint UK-Poland Treaty on Defence and Security Cooperation.

This is only the second such treaty we have signed with a European Union country. There could be no clearer expression of the closeness of the UK's relationship with Poland.

This treaty will provide a framework for defence cooperation on areas such as training, exercises, information sharing, defence industry cooperation and capability development.

It will build on the deployment of our troops to Poland under Enhanced Forward Presence, which of course followed our last meeting in London.

We have also agreed here today to bolster our cooperation to counter Russian disinformation in the region, including through new joint strategic communications projects.

We are both deeply concerned by Russia's attempts to weaponise information. The Kremlin is seeking to undermine the international rules-based system and it will not succeed.

We will enhance our cyber security cooperation with Poland, including by hosting a Polish cyber delegation at our National Cyber Security Centre in March next year to share the UK's world-leading expertise and best practice in this area.

The UK and Poland will also continue to work hand-in-glove across the foreign policy spectrum and we look forward to working closely with Poland at the UN Security Council when it becomes a member next year.

We have agreed to reinforce our commitment to tackle serious and organised crime, including by working together to reduce firearms trafficking from Eastern Europe, and working together to tackle the scourge of modern slavery.

On trade, already worth over £17 billion in 2016, we have agreed to establish a new UK-Poland Business, Trade and Investment Council.

This will meet for the first time in June next year. The Council will help forge even stronger links between UK and Polish business, including through the Polish diaspora in the UK.

The first of its kind for the UK in Europe, the forum will be business-led, and will work to identify any remaining barriers to bilateral trade and investment as we prepare to leave the EU.

And as part of our commitment to work together more closely on ideas and the knowledge economy, we have agreed that 2018 will be a UK-Polish Year of Entrepreneurship, Science and Innovation. This will support our growing links in science, education and research.

Finally, I want to make the point that a key priority for me here today is giving assurances to the nearly 1 million Polish citizens living in the UK that they are a strong part of our society, and we want them to stay.

That's why we worked so hard to get a deal with the EU earlier this month to guarantee the rights of EU citizens living in the UK.

EU citizens living in the UK will have their rights enshrined in UK law and enforced by British courts. They will be able to go on living their lives as before.

As I have said many times before, and as has been repeated here today, although the UK is leaving the European Union, we are not leaving Europe. And today I have reaffirmed to Prime Minister Morawiecki that we want to work with Poland and the other member states in the future to protect our shared values, people and interests.

We are building a strategic partnership with Poland from a base of shared history and deep ties of friendship that will outlast our exit from the EU.

So today's talks have been very productive. There is much we can work on and celebrate together in 2018, Poland's 100th year of independence.

Thank you, Mateusz.