

Speech: Secretary of State Speech in Washington DC

It's a great honour to be back in Washington DC and to have the opportunity to update you on the current situation in Northern Ireland.

And I'd like to thank the Northern Ireland Bureau and in particular Norman Houston for hosting me this evening.

Norman is quite simply the consummate professional, rising from a clerical assistant to his current role promoting Northern Ireland as Director of the Bureau.

And, earlier this summer, his contribution was rightly recognised with the award of an OBE by Her Majesty the Queen.

So thank you Norman for all the fantastic work that you do. Northern Ireland is very lucky to have you.

Before referring specifically to Northern Ireland, I can't help but reflect during my two days here and in Boston how much I've been struck by the bonds that unite the United Kingdom and the United States.

You remain our closest and most important ally. No two countries do as much and share as much as we do, as well as being our largest single trading partner.

And as the UK leaves the European Union next year we want to continue building on that to ensure that the relationship between our two great countries goes from strength to strength.

We might be leaving the EU, but we are not leaving Europe and we are certainly not departing the world stage.

Our departure provides challenges of course, but also opportunities with old allies and new friends alike.

We fully intend to be a global UK, and in that adventure, there is no greater partner than the United States.

US friendship and backing has, of course, been clearly evident over recent decades in Northern Ireland in support of the great progress that has been made there.

It is invaluable and deeply appreciated by both the UK and Irish Governments, but most importantly by the people of Northern Ireland themselves.

This year all of us have been marking the twentieth anniversary of the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement.

It's far too easy to attach superlatives to individual historical events or documents and to exaggerate their importance.

But I don't think any of us should underestimate the scale and significance of what was achieved by the participants in those talks twenty years ago.

The Belfast Agreement is quite simply one of the most important documents in the complex, intertwined and not always happy history of the United Kingdom and Ireland.

It represented the triumph of politics over the division and destruction of the previous thirty years that had seen over 3,500 killed and countless more lives shattered by violence.

And along with its successor agreements it has been the foundation stone of all that has been achieved.

So all of us who care deeply about Northern Ireland have an overriding responsibility to do all that we can to protect, preserve and promote that Agreement.

That has to be at the core of everything we do including as the UK leaves the EU.

And for our part the United Kingdom Government remains absolutely steadfast in our support for it, and for upholding our commitments under it.

To the constitutional principles it set out, to the institutions it establishes and the rights that it guarantees.

As a result of the relative peace and stability that the Agreement ushered in for so many people, Northern Ireland is a place transformed from where it was 20 years ago.

Unemployment is at near record lows while employment is at near record highs.

Tourism is booming as anyone who's seen the cruise ships at Belfast Harbour and the crowds at Titanic Quarter, many of them American I'm pleased to say, will testify.

The USA is Northern Ireland's second largest destination for exports.

While the USA is the top country for foreign direct investment into Northern Ireland.

Names like Citigroup, Caterpillar, Seagate and Allstate whose expanded new offices I opened in July.

For our part, the UK Government continues to demonstrate its strong commitment to Northern Ireland through public spending that per head remains over 20 per cent higher than the UK average.

Indeed Northern Ireland probably has amongst the best quality of life of anywhere in the UK.

So there is a great deal of good news coming out of Northern Ireland today.

But I firmly believe that Northern Ireland could be doing even better. There is huge potential.

But for that to be fully untapped and realised, Northern Ireland needs to see all the institutions of the 1998 Agreement fully up and running and working for the good of the community.

For all the events this year to mark the 20th anniversary of the Agreement, things do look a little hollow when the institutions that are central to that Agreement have not now been working for over 20 months.

The UK Government believes wholeheartedly in devolution for Northern Ireland.

We want to see local politicians taking local decisions fully accountable to a local Assembly.

And while we will continue to make the necessary interventions to ensure good governance and the delivery of public services, such as the Budget passed in Westminster in July, this can never be a substitute for local decision making.

So Northern Ireland needs devolved government at Stormont along with all the other institutions of the Agreement working as they were intended.

And earlier this month I set out to Parliament a plan to try and bring that about.

We intend to introduce legislation in the coming weeks that will set out a limited and prescribed period in which I am no longer under an obligation to set a date for an Assembly election.

The legislation will also include provisions to give greater clarity and certainty to enable NI departments to continue to take decisions in the public interest and to ensure the continued delivery of public services.

I'm also engaged in discussions with the parties and the Irish Government, in accordance with the three stranded approach, to try and find a basis for moving into more formal political dialogue leading to a restoration of the institutions.

And the legislation will enable me to make some key public appointments, like the Policing Board.

All of this is a package which needs to be taken together; a pathway to talks and the restoration of fully functioning devolved government.

Of course there is no guarantee of success.

Neither the UK nor the Irish Government can force an agreement on Northern Ireland.

That has to come principally from the main political parties in the Assembly.

But I do believe that the barriers to devolved government are not insurmountable. Certainly when one looks at the issues Northern Ireland's politicians have grappled with and resolved in the past.

So this is achievable ... and as a UK Government we will do all we can to restore devolution in Northern Ireland.

I know that many people here are also concerned about legacy issues.

And the UK Government is committed to doing what we can to provide better outcomes for victims and survivors of the Troubles.

It is clear that the hurt and suffering caused by decades-old events have a profound and lasting impact on individuals, families and communities.

Some victims and survivors may seek investigations and justice through the courts; others are looking for information about incidents that affected them or their loved ones; others want to leave the past behind.

So earlier this year, after engaging with all the main NI parties, we launched a consultation on the proposed four new legacy institutions set out in the 2014 Stormont House Agreement: Historical Investigations Unit; Independent Commission on Information Retrieval; Oral History Archive; and Implementation and Reconciliation Group.

We continue to believe that these potentially provide the best way forward, and will work in ways that are fair, balanced, equitable and proportionate.

One thing is clear, the current mechanisms for addressing the past are not delivering enough for victims, survivors and for wider society, and change is needed.

But I want this to be an open consultation in which everyone has their say.

There are no easy answers for addressing such a traumatic and difficult period in the history of Northern Ireland – this is an opportunity for everyone with an interest in addressing our troubled past to have their say.

Finally, a word about the UK's departure from the EU, which will happen next March.

Let me be clear.

We want a deep and special partnership with the EU.

But as the Prime Minister said last Friday, there are still two fundamental issues on which we remain far apart.

The first is the economic relationship after we have left, and we now need to hear from the EU what the real issues are and what their alternative is so that we can discuss them.

The second is the so called Irish 'backstop'.

As the Joint Report between the UK and the EU last December made very clear, we are committed to no hard border on the island of Ireland.

We cannot, however, countenance any proposal that threatens the economic and constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom.

But that is what the Commission's current proposals for a so-called 'backstop' on Ireland do, by creating two customs territories within the UK.

And as the PM has said, this would effectively mean us breaking up the United Kingdom which is simply not acceptable and this Government will never agree to it.

The EU referendum was the largest single exercise in democracy the UK has ever undertaken.

We will not overturn the result of that referendum.

So we will continue to engage seriously and intensively with a strong commitment to resolving these two outstanding issues.

Throughout this process, we will make sure that we protect the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement in all its parts under all circumstances.

At this late stage in the negotiations, it is not acceptable for the EU simply to reject our proposals without a detailed explanation and counter proposals.

Throughout this process we have treated the EU with nothing but respect.

The UK expects the same from the EU.

Twenty years on from the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland has achieved so much and come such a long way.

It is therefore with more than a tinge of sadness and frustration that we currently have no Executive and no Assembly.

Yet for all that, I remain confident and optimistic for the future.

Not least because of my confidence in the people of Northern Ireland.

We can and, I think, we will get those institutions back up and running.

It's what the people of Northern Ireland clearly want, and it's the right thing for Northern Ireland.

We need to get back to the spirit that inspired those who made that historic agreement twenty years ago.

To reach an accommodation that enables us to restore stable devolved government that delivers for the whole community in Northern Ireland on a

sustainable basis.

I've set out a clear plan to help us get there and it's our absolute priority.

So that we can build a stronger, brighter and more prosperous Northern Ireland that works for everyone.

And in that venture I'm confident that we can rely on the continuing support and goodwill from friends in the United States.

Press release: Foreign Secretary urges allies to commit to Yemen peace process

During a meeting in New York with his US, Saudi and Emirati counterparts, the Foreign Secretary urged those present to seize the opportunity for political progress. The group underlined their complete support for the UN process led by Special Envoy Martin Griffiths.

The group also discussed the destabilising effect of Iran on Yemen and the wider region, and how to put in place confidence-building measures following the breakdown of the Geneva peace talks.

In the context of a rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation, the Quad members discussed how they could provide greater assistance to the Yemeni people by facilitating the entry of humanitarian and commercial goods into Yemen.

Further information

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[Press release: UK urges donors to support African Union Mission in Somalia](#)

Today the UK, Somalia, Italy and Ethiopia brought together international partners in support of Somalia's security, political and economic reforms.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin co-hosted the meeting at the UN General Assembly in New York, with Foreign Minister Ahmed Isse Awad of Somalia, State Minister Hirut Zemene of Ethiopia and Enzo Moavero Milanesi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy. Alongside senior government representatives, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, AU Peace and Security Commissioner Chergui and Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development attended.

Minister Baldwin praised the bravery and positive impact of African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) troops and the Somali forces who are fighting against Al Shabaab and restoring stability to the country. She emphasised the importance of a successful transition of responsibility for Somalia's security to its own forces. A rushed withdrawal, without sustainable and predictable funding in place, would jeopardise the fragile progress made over recent years.

During her visit to Kenya (30 August 2018), the Prime Minister announced over £7m of additional funding to support AMISOM's work. She called on the international community to join the UK in providing additional funding to AMISOM to ensure it was sufficiently funded to deliver a successful security transition.

Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

Somalia has a real chance for a better future. One that allows its people to flourish, provides no space for terrorist groups, and contributes to regional stability.

Helping to build that future must be a truly international effort. Today I am calling on Somalia's friends to contribute to ensure sustainable funding for AMISOM.

Somalia's Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, His Excellency Ahmed Isse Awad said:

The Federal Government of Somalia remains committed to implementing the key political, economic and security reforms that will help Somalia emerge from the many difficult years it has experienced. The support of the international community has been vital to Somalia thus far. We look forward to continued engagement and support with our international partners as we advance our reform agenda and the transfer of responsibility for Somalia's security from AMISOM to Somali security forces.

Today's meeting also discussed Somalia's wider state-building efforts, including recent progress on political and economic reforms.

The UK is a leading partner for Somalia, and the second largest bilateral donor. This financial year, the UK will provide approximately £313m of support to Somalia, contributing to the country's stability and helping to make a tangible difference to the lives of its poorest and most vulnerable people.

During her recent visit to Kenya, Prime Minister May announced additional funding for Somalia. Over £25m will support Somalia's efforts to build a stable and democratic political system, including future one-person-one-vote elections. Further funding of over £60m will provide lifesaving food, clean water and medicine, along with support to find stable jobs, to help over a million people cope with and recover from the impact of conflict and drought.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Harriett Baldwin on Twitter [@hbaldwin](#)
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Speech: North Korea must abandon its nuclear weapons

Thank you Mr. President.

In March 1963, President Kennedy predicted that as many as 25 nations would soon develop nuclear weapons, posing what he described as the greatest possible danger to the survival of humanity. In the event his bleak prophecy never came to pass. Seven years after Kennedy voiced his fears, the world summoned the collective wisdom to create the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which now has 191 States Parties.

All but a handful of countries put aside their differences and agreed that global security, indeed the existence of the human race, depended on halting the spread of nuclear weapons.

Only one country signed the NPT and then sought to withdraw from it. Only one country promised in this Treaty never to develop nuclear weapons and then did exactly that. And that country is North Korea which has tested six nuclear devices in the last 12 years.

Today the international community shares a collective responsibility to ensure that North Korea complies once again with the rules on which the safety of every nation depends.

Britain welcomes North Korea's decision to re-engage in diplomacy since the beginning of this year. We're encouraged by the meeting between President Moon Jae-in and Kim Jong Un in Pyongyang last week. We hope that North Korea's repeated promises to denuclearise are genuine but we note the lack of concrete steps so far.

Action counts for more than assurances.

Deeds must follow words.

North Korea must comprehensively, verifiably and irreversibly abandon its nuclear weapons, and the means to build them, in accordance with the resolutions passed by this Council. Until that moment comes, Britain believes that the sanctions agreed by the international community should continue to be rigorously enforced, reflecting our shared belief that North Korea's nuclear ambitions threaten the safety of all our peoples.

This Council passed the relevant resolutions as one and we should enforce them as one until the conditions that caused their adoption have decisively and irrevocably changed.

Britain will continue to play our part in this effort. We're supporting the

work of the Sanctions Committee established by Resolution 1718 and the UN Panel of Experts.

The onus rests on the whole Council to prevent North Korea from evading sanctions, particularly the controls on refined petroleum products. We support the assessment presented by Secretary Pompeo and the United States, which demonstrates that North Korea has systematically violated the controls placed on the import of these products and already breached the annual cap for 2018.

This year, Britain has sent two Royal Navy ships, HMS Sutherland and HMS Albion, to the Pacific where they have helped to monitor illegal fuel transfers. A third ship, HMS Argyll, is due in East Asia later this year.

Members of this Council, especially the five permanent members, have a duty to uphold and enforce the sanctions contained in the resolutions which we ourselves supported. We mustn't allow the authority of the Security Council to be undermined.

Today, North Korea's leadership has a choice to make. In a country where 200,000 children are acutely malnourished, half of all schools have no access to running water, and only 3 per cent of roads are paved, the regime has squandered the nation's resources and deepened the poverty of its people by pursuing an illegal stockpile of nuclear weapons.

Far from bringing prestige or security, this arsenal has only increased tensions in East Asia and brought upon North Korea the most extensive economic sanctions ever imposed by this Council in the 21st century.

As recently as 1973, North and South Korea had about the same GDP per capita. Since then, decades of communist economic failure in North Korea have opened up a twenty-fold disparity: today, North Korea's GDP per capita is less than 5 per cent of South Korea's.

But it is not too late to change course. Just as President Kennedy's prediction turned out to be pessimistic, there is nothing inevitable about the road along which North Korea has so far travelled.

Before his regime wastes even more resources, creates yet more poverty and triggers still greater confrontations, Kim Jong-un could decide to allow his country to flourish in peace and safety. He could choose to heed the will of this Council, keep his own promises, and relinquish the nuclear arsenal that has brought only misery and tension. The decision rests on his shoulders. Until then, this Council should hold fast to the Resolutions that we passed.

News story: Home Secretary visits Spain and Germany

Home Secretary Sajid Javid this week (25 and 26 September) visited Spain and Germany where he stressed the need for continued co-operation with European partners on security issues.

Speaking at EFE press in Madrid, the Home Secretary told an audience of journalists and parliamentarians that the UK and Spain had a shared history of fighting terrorism and that it needs to be as strong and as effective once the UK leaves the EU.

In a meeting with his Spanish counterpart Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska, they both agreed that the close relationship between the countries must continue.

The Home Secretary also paid tribute to those who had been victims of terror at the Garden of Remembrance in Madrid where he had the opportunity to meet with the parents of Ignacio Echeverría, a Spanish national who died in the 2017 London Bridge attack and who was posthumously awarded the George Medal for his bravery.

In Germany, the Home Secretary met with leading German government officials and opinion formers at a policy meeting at the not-for-profit think tank Körber Stiftung to discuss the future security partnership.

He also discussed the issue with Interior Minister Horst Seehofer in a meeting that also covered co-operation on migration and serious organised crime.

The systems and rules to facilitate a continued strong security relationship between the UK and Germany were the focus of talks with the President of the German Bundespolizei Dieter Romann. To conclude his visit, Sajid Javid spoke about the mutual value of close security co-operation with Bundesminister Helge Braun.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

My visits to Spain and Germany this week showed me once more how closely our countries work together to keep our citizens safe.

We face many of the same threats from terrorism, serious organised crime and hostile states.

In my meetings with counterparts in both countries there was a shared belief that we must continue to work together because these threats do not respect our borders.