

Speech: UK committed to two-state solution, Jerusalem as shared capital

Thank you Madame President, and thank you Mr Mladenov for that very sobering briefing. I'd like to start by thanking him and his staff for everything they're doing to try and calm down the violence and also echo his tribute to the medical staff on the ground and his appeal for facilitation of evacuation of the wounded.

Madame President, we've seen a concatenation of loss of life, casualties, volume of live fire in Gaza yesterday and this has been shocking and I think appalling to most of us. It is a familiar – depressingly familiar – pattern that we have seen over recent weeks. And it includes the deaths of children. At a highly sensitive time in the region, we call for calm and we call for restraint. A further escalation of violence serves no one's interest. It is only destructive to peace efforts and to wider regional security.

Madame President, we understand that 60 people were killed yesterday in Gaza. Six of them children. Around 2,771 people were reported injured, and that included over 1,300 by live ammunition. The death toll on Monday means that more than 90 Palestinians have been killed in the past six weeks for approaching the fence that has been placed around Gaza.

There is an urgent need, we believe, to establish the facts around yesterday's events, including why such a volume of live fire continues to be deemed justified.

Palestinian right to peaceful protest is undeniable. But at the same time, we are deeply concerned that peaceful protests in Gaza have been exploited by extremist elements. For example, we've seen IDF troops targeted by IEDs, and we've seen the use of Molotov cocktails. This is not acceptable.

The Palestinians have a right to peaceful protest, and Israel has an undeniable right to protect its borders from Hamas and other terrorist groups and threats. The United Kingdom remains strongly supportive of Israel's right to defend itself. We recognize today is a sensitive anniversary for the Palestinians. We implore Israel to act with restraint in accordance with international law, and more than anything, to ensure that its security forces do not resort to the use of excessive force.

Madame President, we understand that 60 people were killed yesterday in Gaza. Six of them children. Around 272,771 were reported injured, and that included over 1,300 by live ammunition. The death toll on Monday means that more than 90 Palestinians have been killed in the past six weeks for approaching the fence that has been placed around Gaza.

The volume of live fire used in Gaza yesterday and the consequent number of deaths is distressing and cannot be ignored by the Council. I want to reiterate the United Kingdom's support for independent and transparent

investigations into the events that have taken place, and in recent weeks, and including the extent to which Israeli security forces' rules of engagement are in line with international law. The death toll alone warrants such a comprehensive inquiry and we continue to urge that the findings of these investigations be made public, and if wrongdoing is found, that those responsible, be held to account.

Madame President, our position on the status of Jerusalem and the move of the American Embassy is well known. Our position is clear and long-standing. The status of Jerusalem should be determined by a negotiated settlement between the Israelis and the Palestinians and Jerusalem should ultimately be the shared capital of the Israeli and Palestinian states. We need to look forward and we need to work urgently towards a resolution of the long-standing issues between Israel and the Palestinian people.

Like this Council, the United Kingdom is committed to a two-state solution with Jerusalem as a shared capital and to achieving peace and stability in the wider region. We see negotiations towards a two-state solution as the best way to end the occupation and to meet the national aspirations of the Jewish and Palestinian peoples. But now more than ever, Madame President, we need a political process that delivers a two-state solution. We agree with the Envoy that the situation in Gaza is desperate and deteriorating and that the international community must step up its efforts.

To that end, Madame President, I'd like to close by making a request of the UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process that he and his office bring forward proposals to address the situation in Gaza. These should include easing restrictions on access and movement, and it should include international support for urgent infrastructure and economic development projects. We also reiterate our support for the Egyptian-led reconciliation process and the return of the Palestinian Authority to full administration of the Gaza Strip.

I thank you Madame President.

Speech: UK-US business links at the heart of trade

It's a long time since I left America. I was born in New York and I spent my first 8 years in the US; and then for most of the '90s I went back to work there, working on Wall Street, but covering markets and clients across America.

But then New York, and America: they never really leave you, do they?

Those of us lucky enough to live there always remember the dynamism and

endless optimism you get – it's easy to be cynical, until you walk through the cities which that optimism built.

And those, like me, who've worked and lived in several countries know there are few closer together than our 2.

Somehow, people always seem to undervalue the cultural factor in trade.

We spend our time talking about the technicalities of tariff schedules and the intricacies of international standards – but being able to speak the other person's language is pretty important when you're sealing a deal.

It's obvious when you think about it.

Well if you're an American business looking to trade abroad – there's no other country you can trade with that's got more English speakers. And it's the same the other way around.

But our links go far beyond language.

We have the same business culture – the French don't even distinguish it, they just refer to it as 'capitalisme anglo-saxon'.

In government, for example, our starting assumption is that you – business – you're good people and you know what you're doing. That's not that usual worldwide.

Last week I got talking to someone who'd worked in finance, in a number of different countries.

He said, the thing about the British and Americans is you're both constantly worrying about losing competitiveness. But you don't get it – it's just so easy to do business here.

That's why we're the 2 countries ranked sixth and seventh for ease of doing business in the entire world; why we're the world's first and second-largest service exporters; and why every single year, every single one of the 10 most reputed universities are in either the UK or the US.

That's why the work British-American business does to forge those links is so important: so a big thank you, on behalf of the government, for everything you do.

And that's why this excellent publication is so important. Yes, America is our largest export market: almost twice the size of Germany.

Yes, we've got over half a trillion pounds invested in each other's economies; and yes, that's huge.

But the statistics don't matter in and of themselves. It's what they mean.

That half trillion, for example: that means there's huge numbers of Brits with jobs at American firms; and as the report states over a million

Americans who have jobs because of British investment.

So it's the individual examples, like the ones we've got here, that matter – the individual exemplars that we're here to celebrate.

Let me pick some out. How about the 100 US veterans who've got jobs at Britain's Jaguar LandRover, as part of a dedicated scheme? Or the 1,000 US employees of architects Arup – skilled jobs from a respected company.

And those examples: they're just the tip of the iceberg, a drop in the ocean, compared to the value of UK-US trade for our jobs and our businesses.

There's 14,000 UK companies with US subsidiaries.

I've seen some of them in my travels across the US I have done in this ministerial job: to Chicago, LA, San Diego, Denver, Ft. Worth, Austin, Seattle and Salt Lake City.

So the government wants to secure and enhance your ability to trade with America.

And we're taking steps right now to do that.

[UK Export Finance](#) can now provide up to £4 billion of support for the American market.

We've set up a [Trade and Investment Working Group](#), to boost commercial links before we leave the EU. We've already made good progress – for example, we've agreed steps to protect small businesses' intellectual property.

And we're laying the ground for a new, comprehensive trade agreement with the US – one of the great opportunities beyond the Customs Union.

The American opportunity is one we're well placed to seize. Few economies are more complementary. Few allies closer.

That'll be strengthened when the President visits here in July.

To quote Steven Mnuchin, the US Treasury Secretary: "As soon as the UK is ready we will be prepared to negotiate an attractive trade deal".

Well – we will be ready.

But we need your help. We can't let people take the benefits of free trade or our Anglo-American friendship for granted. It's too important for that.

You give people jobs – don't be afraid to shout about it.

This opportunity is far from a drop in the ocean: it goes from sea to shining sea.

Press release: PM statement with President Erdogan

President Erdogan, it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Downing Street today.

The UK-Turkey relationship is indispensable.

The issues we have discussed underline just how important it is that we work ever more closely together to make our people safer and more prosperous.

I'd like to start by addressing the troubling situation in Gaza and the West Bank, which President Erdogan and I have discussed today.

The loss of life we have seen is tragic and extremely concerning.

Such violence is destructive to peace efforts and we call on all sides to show restraint.

There is an urgent need to establish the facts of what happened yesterday through an independent and transparent investigation, including why such a volume of live fire was used and what role Hamas played in events.

Palestinians have the right to protest, but these protests must be peaceful. We are concerned that extremist elements are seeking to hijack legitimate protests to further their own objectives.

And while we do not question the right of Israel to defend its borders, the use of live fire and the resulting loss of life is deeply troubling. We urge Israel to show restraint.

It is in everyone's interests for peace and stability to prevail in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

The discussions we have had today have covered the breadth and depth of our relationship.

Allow me to say a few words on each of the key topics we've discussed.

Firstly, we are NATO allies and remain firmly committed to the Alliance as the best way of guaranteeing our collective security.

Since my visit to Ankara in January last year, both Turkey and the UK have suffered grievous attacks by terrorists.

As Daesh is defeated militarily, we are aware of the risk of foreign fighters dispersing from Syria and Iraq.

To counter this we have today agreed to take concrete steps towards measures that will formalise our information sharing.

Our intent is to agree that when Turkish authorities return a British Citizen suspected of terrorist offences to Britain, they will do so with vital evidence such as media taken from mobile devices and transcripts of interviews.

This will support our efforts to secure the convictions of those who seek to do us harm.

We have also reaffirmed our commitment to deepen co-operation between the Home Office and the Turkish Ministry of the Interior.

This commitment means that we will look at how our police, border, customs and coastguard agencies can share information more easily in order to tackle the terrorists and organised criminals involved in money laundering, drug smuggling and people and arms trafficking.

Turkey is on the frontline of many vital issues for the UK, particularly in Syria where it is an important member of the Global Coalition Against Daesh.

Today President Erdogan and I have reaffirmed our commitment to defeating Daesh and the need for a political settlement to end the war and provide stability for all of Syria, Turkey and the wider region.

We also agreed on the need to ensure humanitarian access in Syria and on the importance of compliance with International Humanitarian Law and the protection of civilians by all sides.

We reiterated our condemnation of the terrible chemical weapons attacks in Douma and on the streets of Salisbury.

While clearly the two incidents differ in order of magnitude, they are part of a pattern of disregard for the global norms that prohibit the use of chemical weapons.

Today President Erdogan and I agreed on the importance of restoring the international norm that the use of chemical weapons is abhorrent and can never be acceptable.

I underlined once again the UK position that the Salisbury attack was not just an act of attempted murder in Salisbury – nor just an act against the UK by Russia.

It was an affront to the rules based system on which we all depend.

The conflict in Syria has led to the displacement of millions of people, both within Syria and beyond.

I pay tribute to Turkey's extraordinary generosity in hosting more than three and a half million Syrian refugees and educating more than 600,000 Syrian children.

We recognise the enormous effort that the Turkish authorities are making to give those refugees the help they need.

In total the UK has committed more than £750 million both bilaterally and through the EU budget to the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, in order to support those efforts.

During this visit the UK and Turkey have agreed high-level talks between our countries to explore ways in which we can work together to build capacity in the region and reduce the flow of migrants.

The importance of the UK-Turkey partnership is also demonstrated by our growing trade relationship.

Trade between the UK and Turkey has increased by more than 50 per cent over the past decade and is now worth more than £15 billion.

We continue to build on this and look to our future trade relationship once the UK leaves the EU.

During my visit to Ankara in 2017, we agreed to establish a trade working group to explore ways to liberalise and increase trade between the UK and Turkey.

Our officials continue to work together to build a solid foundation on which our relationship can flourish.

During my visit to Turkey, BAE Systems and TAI also agreed to collaborate on the pre-design phase of Turkey's new TFX fighter jet, which resulted in a contract worth more than £100 million being signed in August 2017.

This was the start of a deep and enduring defence partnership, including a new and unique government-to-government agreement that set a new framework for co-operation and dialogue, including between our defence ministries and air forces.

And today we can discuss the next phase of this project, Rolls Royce's bid to co-design the engine for the TFX fighter jet. This would support the development of aerospace engineering capability and jobs in the UK and Turkey and we look forward to continuing discussions.

Finally, the UK stood with the Turkish people when its democracy came under attack in July 2016.

It is right that those who sought to overthrow the democratically elected government are brought to justice.

But it is also important that in the defence of democracy – which has been facing extraordinary pressures from the failed coup, instability across the border from Syria and from Kurdish terrorism – Turkey does not lose sight of the values it is seeking to defend.

That is why today I have underlined to President Erdogan that we want to see

democratic values and international human rights obligations upheld.

Throughout this process and in the face of the shared challenges ahead, the UK will remain a true friend to Turkey.

So President Erdogan once again thank you for your visit and for such productive talks.

[Press release: FCO statement on opening of Kerch bridge](#)

Sir Alan Duncan said:

Crimea is part of Ukraine, and its annexation by Russia is a breach of international law.

The opening of this bridge represents yet another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty, and a further example of Russia's reckless behaviour. We continue to work with partners to oppose the annexation, including by maintaining a robust package of sanctions.

The UK also remains deeply concerned by the human rights situation in Crimea, where we have seen the systematic persecution of minority groups and of those who voice their opposition to Russia's illegal annexation of the territory. We call again for Russia to release all Ukrainian political prisoners held in Crimea and in Russia, and to allow unrestrained access for international human rights monitoring bodies to the peninsula.

Further information

- Follow Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk
020 7008 3100

Press release: Unemployment levels at record low

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, said:

This Government is committed to delivering a United Kingdom that works for everyone and so I welcome today's Labour Market Statistics, which show a continued strength in the Northern Ireland economy.

The unemployment rate is down to its lowest ever level of 3.1% from over 8% in the wake of the recession and, crucially, the employment rate is up to one of the highest rates on record at 69.7%.

More than 15,000 new jobs were created over the last year, meaning more people with the security of a regular pay packet to provide for themselves and their families.