

Speech: Foreign Secretary remarks on the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman

Good afternoon,

It's a pleasure to welcome my friend, His Excellency Adel Al-Jubeir, and I'm delighted that His Royal Highness, the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has chosen to come to Britain during his first official visit overseas.

This is a moment of huge significance in Saudi Arabia when ambitious reforms designed to achieve economic and social renewal are taking place.

In the nine months since His Royal Highness became Crown Prince, we have witnessed changes that would have been hard to imagine just a few years ago, and as a longstanding partner of Saudi Arabia, Britain will do everything in our power to support those reforms and help advance the ambitions contained in the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

Adel and I have just come from Downing Street and an afternoon of excellent meetings that we had with the Prime Minister and His Royal Highness and I believe this occasion marks the beginning of a new era in our friendship because the very breadth and ambition of Vision 2030 allows our relationship to move forwards to include cooperation in education, health, culture, sport and technology, with it creating new opportunities for British companies and delivering jobs and growth here in Britain.

And I'm delighted that we've reached an agreement that should lead to new Saudi investment in and through Britain, and procurement in companies worth up to £65bn, virtually \$100bn, over the next 10 years. Providing a vote of confidence in London as the leading financial centre in the world.

Today, our talks have focused on how the UK can use its world-beating expertise to support Saudi Arabia's reforms and how we can work together to end the tragic conflict in Yemen.

It is vital that we bring this appalling conflict which has inflicted so much humanitarian suffering to an end. Britain supports Saudi Arabia's right to defend its national security against missile attacks from Yemen, many of which have targeted the Kingdom's cities, including Riyadh.

Any solution to the conflict must ensure that Saudi Arabia no longer faces this cross-border security threat. Today we have agreed to strengthen the UN inspection of shipping in order to ensure that all Yemeni ports remain open to the humanitarian and commercial supplies that Yemen's people so desperately need.

We also call on the Houthis to do what they must and allow unimpeded

humanitarian access in the areas that they control.

We will redouble, we in the UK will redouble, our efforts to support the UN political process and we hope to convene our counterparts from the US and the United Arab Emirates before Easter in order – that's to say, Adel and I will do that, in order to make more progress towards a political solution which we believe to be absolutely vital.

I'm delighted that Saudi Arabia will also develop a plan for the reconstruction of Yemen after any settlement of the conflict.

Saudi Arabia is changing and so is Britain's partnership with the Kingdom in order to benefit the security and the prosperity of both our Kingdoms for many years to come.

Thank you.