

# Chief of the Defence Staff Lord Mayor of London Defence & Security Lecture

My Lord Mayor, Your Excellency, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to be here at Mansion House to deliver your Annual Defence and Security Lecture and thank you for those kind words, and for the many ways the Corporation of the City of London supports the Armed Forces, and your charitable and professional endeavours for the people of Ukraine.

This is my first public speech since before the summer, and the theme – continuity and change – feels worryingly a little more apt today than it did when I chose it back in September.

But let's start with the remarkable and historic events of last month.

In performing our last duty to Her Majesty The Queen – and our first duty to His Majesty The King – we saw the very best of the British Armed Forces.

The spectacle of those ten days, the pageantry, the horses, the gun salutes, the remarkable sight of 140 sailors pulling the state gun carriage, the strength and solemnity of those ten grenadiers who carried Her Majesty's coffin, all sent a message to the world about our country.

It's an example of what the academic, Professor Julian Lindley-French, has termed British elan – a strategic brand, executed with such style and assurance that it becomes a form of power in itself.

And yet these are very serious times, as The Lord Mayor said. We have a war in Europe. Political turbulence at home. A worrying economic outlook, domestically and internationally, compounded by growing food and energy insecurity.

So, it seems appropriate to offer some thoughts through a Defence lens on what this is all about, what is our role and what comes next.

And I hope I may be permitted to add a third 'C' into the title of this speech retrospectively and that is Confidence.

Because my premise is three-fold:

First, that Russia's invasion of Ukraine is the spur to rediscover our confidence and self-belief: in our democratic values, in the rule-of-law, and in the collective power of the international community.

Secondly, that we should recognise the authority and agency that the military instrument offers, and we should willingly embrace the ability of the Armed Forces to support our national interest in all its forms.

And third, that we should be confident that the vision for the Armed Forces

in last year's Integrated Review is the right one; and the forthcoming IR Refresh is an opportunity to contribute even more to our nation's security and prosperity.

So, what is it all about?

I've always been of the view that Putin made a strategic miscalculation by invading Ukraine, and the truism is more accurate than normal, that strategic errors lead to strategic consequences.

Eight months on, Putin's problems are mounting. He's undermined Russia's status as a great power, mortgaged his country's economic future, repelled its neighbours in the 'near abroad' and even China is losing patience. Meanwhile, his troops are ceding ground, running out of ammunition, and winter is coming.

And while handing call-out papers to political dissidents and protesters may be a ruthless way of dealing with opposition to his regime, it is a hopeless way to build an Army.

He has few options left – hence the nuclear rhetoric. And while this is worrying and deeply irresponsible, it is a sign of weakness, which is precisely why the international community needs to remain strong and united.

Ukraine, on the other hand, continues to perform magnificently. In my most recent visit to Kyiv, my message to General Zaluzhnyi was one of admiration, and that the United Kingdom will stand by Ukraine for as long as necessary.

But we also need to recognise that there is more at stake than the future of a single country, vital as that struggle may be.

Almost four hundred years ago, the Peace of Westphalia established the principle that no one state should violate the sovereign borders of another.

At a similar time, the Dutch Lawyer Hugo Grotius laid the foundations for international law, and the rules which governed the behaviour of nation states in the global commons.

In more recent times, the Atlantic Charter and the founding of the United Nations, shaped the modern world around the principles of self-determination, democracy and human rights.

And yet President Putin believes the rules do not apply to him. That his Army can cross international borders with impunity. That he can renege on commercial agreements and turn off the gas to Europe, and it doesn't matter. That he can close access to the Black Sea ports to merchant vessels and millions will die, and it doesn't matter.

But these things do matter. And that is what this is all about.

These things matter to the thousands of Ukrainians who are dying and suffering every single day.

And they matter here in the City of London too, because markets thrive on stability, and our prosperity rests on a world that is safe for the passage of trade.

And when the rules are broken, volatility and instability follow. When aggression is left unchecked the costs ricochet through global markets. This affects people everywhere, and especially the world's poorest.

This is more than a war over the borders on a map. This is about the future of international security and the peace and prosperity that we in this country have been so fortunate to enjoy for much of lives.

So then what is our role?

The role of the United Kingdom Armed Forces, even with a war in Europe, is more than just focusing on defending the nation.

It is about a maximalist approach to the military instrument. Using our power and influence in all its guises: both to further our security and prosperity. But especially – when we get it right – to add to the agency and authority of the British Government and the nation.

You are seeing that in our response to Ukraine.

I am immensely proud of the British Armed Forces and the role that we are playing, whether training alongside Ukraine since 2014, and that we are now training thousands more here in the UK: an effort that has expanded to include contributions from Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and others.

I am proud that we were the first European nation to provide lethal aid. And that our Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, did so much to galvanise other nations to do the same through the establishment of the International Donor Coordination Centre in Germany.

But both the previous and current British Prime Minister have demanded even more. They want defence to work alongside trade and diplomacy to deliver closer relationships with India, Japan and Australia. To deliver our Indo-Pacific tilt and support broader government efforts, whether Levelling Up, Maintaining the Union, or our international strategic partnerships.

And it was illuminating to see that when the Prime Minister of the world's third largest economy, Japan, came together with the Prime Minister of the fifth largest economy in Downing Street last May, the rather boring headline announcement was about a Reciprocal Access Agreement – a technical measure to enable visiting forces. That is what I mean about the military doing far more than just defence and security.

Across this country, Defence secures more than 400,000 jobs, a large proportion of which are high-skilled, high-demand STEM subjects.

We are one of the largest providers of training and skills in the country. There are more than 130,000 uniformed cadets between the ages of 12 and 18, supported by 30,000 adult volunteers. Within the Armed Forces, there are more

than 20,000 apprenticeships underway at any one time.

We spend more than £20 billion with British industry every year. And in 2020 we generated almost £8 billion in defence exports, more than any other European country.

This is the full extent of the military instrument. And what this really provides is not just productivity or value-for-money. The real value is the agency and authority it offers.

And now the Government has committed to increasing Defence spending further, even with a tough economic outlook. This is really significant.

For most of my career, our story has been one of contraction and decline. Now we have the prospect of growth and acceleration.

And that leads me to what comes next.

We have the continuity of last year's Integrated Review, the central elements of which have been borne out by recent events:

The shift from an era of counter-terrorism operations to one of state-based competition.

The acknowledgement of Russia as the most acute threat to the United Kingdom.

The centrality of nuclear deterrence and collective security.

And recognising that our broader security needs to also embrace health and climate change. And that we need to embrace security for prosperity and prosperity for security.

What has changed since last year's review though is the speed and scale of Russia's aggression.

But we should nonetheless be supremely confident about our alliance with NATO: an alliance with more than 3 million people under arms, and with a combined GDP of \$15 trillion compared to just \$1.7 billion for Russia.

Even without the United States, the European members of NATO spend 3-4 times more on Defence than Russia.

So, the question is – with the potential increase to 3% of GDP on Defence, where can we make the most useful contribution?

Britain's forte has rarely been matching its adversaries in terms of mass.

Our approach has tended to reflect the British Way of Warfare, as described by the military theorist Sir Basil Liddell Hart almost a century ago:

The belief that Britain is an expeditionary rather than a continental power.

That our interests are best served by the indirect application of power – particularly economic power – by, with and through our partners.

And that we focus to ensure we provide disproportionate effect and to achieve operational advantage.

This audience will recognise these aspects in the City's own strengths. The capital flows, the deal-brokering, the expertise in mergers and acquisitions; the adherence to the stability that the rule-of-law provides for the capital – and that is what makes London one of the pre-eminent centres for global financial services.

But, looking forwards, we need to have some humility to look again at some of the risks we've taken in recent decades.

We need Armed Forces that are match fit, or more to-the-point, "war-fit", to meet the demands of state-on-state competition, better supported by more resilient supply chains and a greater capacity in our industrial base.

We need to be more agile. Bolder and braver in embracing technology and doing that much, much faster.

We may need to temper our tendency for bespoke procurements and constant commercial competition when we could simply go shopping instead. Why not choose what is available on the market today especially if it means we can get the capability sooner?

And while the threat posed by Russia is a generational challenge, we don't have the luxury of a simple choice over whether to double down on the security of the Euro-Atlantic or see through our tilt to the Indo-Pacific.

The shrinking of the Arctic Ice caps will halve the journey time between European and Asian markets. Climate change will fuel conflict and inequality. And health and energy security will become even more tied to international security.

This means having Armed Forces that are global in outlook. Anchored in NATO, and ready to fight alongside our allies in Europe, but tilting as necessary to Indo-Pacific or wherever in the world our British interests are at stake.

We do this by delivering projects like AUKUS. An audacious piece of statecraft, that strengthens a key ally, opens a world of possibilities for greater Australian-UK and American technological collaboration, and opens the prospect of growing our own submarine force.

FCAS is another example – the UK's sixth generation fighter. A project with the potential to do for combat air what AUKUS is doing for nuclear propulsion. A project that could shape our defence industrial relationships with Italy and Japan for the rest of the century.

The same potential exists for the Army's Future Soldier programme and our growing ambitions in autonomous, hypersonic and quantum technology. Each of them a transformational opportunity; with the power to facilitate our post-Brexit relationships, catalyse our science and industrial bases, generate growth, make us safer and help the nation to prosper.

And the more we achieve, the more our authority grows, and the stronger the example to our allies and partners. This is how we grow our national and collective authority.

So, in drawing to a close, this magnificent thing we call the military instrument is much more than the crucial role we play to defend the nation and the rules-based system the City uses to continue to be the economic powerhouse which drives our prosperity.

It is also a tool to help drive a broader national agenda. And when we get it really right, then we enhance the authority of the British government, and with it our nation's strength and security in this competitive world.

Thank you.

---

## Statement of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan

The Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan express deep concern regarding the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban, including through continued restrictions that limit access to education for women and girls.

The members call on the Taliban to immediately reverse the effective ban on girls' secondary education in Afghanistan, which has been in place for over one year. Members are deeply disturbed by developments where local community demands lead to the reopening of some girls' secondary schools, only to see them forcibly shut down by the Taliban once again. They underscore that the decision by the Taliban to exclude girls from schools does not reflect the wishes and demands of the majority of the Afghan people and that it makes Afghanistan the only country in the world that bans girls' secondary education.

The members of the Group reaffirm the right to education for all Afghans, including girls, and call on the Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students across the country without further delay. They note the importance of education of all people to economic stability and reiterate that exclusion from education prevents women and girls from contributing to Afghanistan's future economic growth and prosperity. Furthermore, they emphasize findings by the World Economic Forum that banning women from working in the government and formal sectors will cause Afghanistan's GDP to contract by a minimum of \$600 million in the immediate term and restrictions on women's private sector employment could lead to a \$1.5 billion loss of output by 2024.

The members of the Group note the heightened risks associated with disruption

of access to education, particularly for girls, making them more vulnerable to child labour and child, early, and forced marriages, as well as to their future economic opportunities, and the long-term consequences this has for durable peace, security and development.

The members of the Group request the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to continue to closely monitor and report on the situation, and request the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to continue to engage with all relevant Afghan political actors and stakeholders, including relevant authorities, on this issue, in accordance with the mandate of UNAMA.

This statement is endorsed by the following members of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan: United Kingdom, Qatar, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Canada, Chad, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United States

---

## [Water company hit with a combined fine of £871,000](#)

One incident caused the death of invertebrate life in a stream for 1.5 kilometres.

Anglian Water has been slapped with a fine totalling £871,000 after a catalogue of system and maintenance failures caused separate incidents of pollution across 3 counties.

The list of process failures included reporting delays, faulty screening and a general breakdown in planning and maintenance, all of which caused damaging blockages and pollution.

One involved a failure by Anglian Water, who set an alarm to the wrong village, delaying their attendance for days. A subsequent biological survey showed dead aquatic invertebrates for 1,500 metres as far down as the next village, as a result.

The water company was also ordered to pay £37,605.13 in costs at Loughborough Magistrates (12 October 2022).

While passing sentence, District Judge Nick Watson, said: 'Anglian Water dragged its feet' in addressing infrastructure improvements.

He said that this appeared to be: '...an endemic part of the culture of the organisation at the time of the offences'.

He added, 'Water companies have a huge responsibility to proactively manage the resources they have been given a responsibility for. Profit must not be at the cost of the environment.'

All incidents took place at Anglian Water sites in Cambridgeshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire across a 5 month spell, between May and September 2019.

The first involved the discharge of poorly treated sewage into the River Lark near Ely in Cambridgeshire in May 2019 from the Isleham sewage treatment works, Isleham.

An unchecked build-up of 'unflushables' such as cotton buds and sanitary pads caused a blockage resulting in discharge of settled sludge into the treated sewage.

The site was originally fitted with a screen to prevent blockages in the process but was removed in 2018. The court heard that increased cleaning had not taken place and no steps taken to reduce the risk of blockages caused by the removal of the screen.

This was likely to have impacted on the River Lark, as the discharge caused reduced levels of dissolved oxygen in the water necessary for fish and invertebrates.

A second incident involved sewage pollution of a tributary of the River Tove, in Hartwell, Northamptonshire in June 2019. The source of the pollution was an Anglian Water Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO), at Hartwell Colmar Kennels, in Hartwell.

After a delay, Anglian Water Operational Control was notified, and the blockage cleared soon after. A tanker was ordered and sewage and 'unflushables' cleared from 10 metres of stream.

It was later found that Anglian Water had delayed reporting to the Environment Agency by over 5 hours.

They had also put an operational warning sensor on the sewer but the telemetry was assigned to the wrong address in a nearby village.

The sensor alarmed in good time and Anglian Water attended but went to the wrong address missing the opportunity to minimise the pollution.

Traces of sewage fungus were present in the stream suggesting the pollution had been occurring for days. A biological survey showed dead aquatic invertebrates for 1,500 metres and as far down as the next village of Ashton.

The court heard how the third incident involved the pollution of a tributary of Claydon Brook, Steeple Claydon in September the same year. The source was Anglian Water sewage treatment works at Steeple Claydon in Buckinghamshire.

The site does have a screening unit on site to reduce blockages in the treatment process, but this had not been used for a few years.

The scum board is meant to prevent the carry over of 'unflushables' and sludge from the primary settlement tanks. This had been incorrectly left at the wrong end of the tank. A routine maintenance visit had also been missed. This resulted in a blockage and loss of treatment.

Anglian Water did not assess the impact on the watercourse, but high levels of organic pollution were detected in water samples. This impacted the levels of oxygen in the stream necessary for fish and invertebrate life.

Environment Agency prosecutor, Rebecca Chalkley, told the court that the 3 pollutions shared common features. She said they all involved missing or inadequate screens that should have strained solid waste from raw sewage.

She said they all involved a delay in attending or reporting pollution incidents. Also they all represented a failure on the part of Anglian Water to properly invest and maintain its infrastructure.

She added: 'With great profit comes great responsibility'.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive at the Environment Agency, said:

We welcome this sentence. Serious pollution is a serious crime.

The Environment Agency will pursue any water company that fails to uphold the law or protect nature, and will continue to press for the strongest possible penalties for those which do not.

Jeremy Hay, Senior Environment Officer from the Environment Agency, said:

This prosecution sends out the message that we will not hesitate to prosecute companies which endanger communities and disregard the environment and the law.

Members of the public with concerns about pollution should contact our 24-hour incident hotline on: 0800 80 70 60.

## **Background**

The Environment Agency has significantly driven up monitoring and transparency from water companies in recent years, so that everyone can see what is going on. This includes:

- **Event Duration Monitoring:** This measures how often and for how long storm overflows are used. The Environment Agency has increased the number of overflows monitored across the network from 800 in 2016 to more than 12,700 in 2021, the equivalent of almost 9 in 10 storm overflows now with monitoring devices. All 15,000 overflows will have them by the end of 2023. All the data is published [online](#). More info on EDM [here](#).

- Flow-to-full treatment: Environment Agency has also asked companies to install new flow monitors on more than 2,000 wastewater treatment works to identify what is happening at those works during the sewage treatment process itself. This has led to a major investigation, announced in November 2021, with the EA requesting more detailed data from all wastewater treatment works.
  - Storm Overflows Taskforce: Through the work of the Storm Overflows Taskforce – made up of Defra, the Environment Agency, Ofwat, Consumer Council for Water, Blueprint for Water and Water UK – water companies have agreed to increase transparency around when and how storm overflows are used: Make real-time data on sewage discharges available at bathing sites all year round.
  - Publish annual monitoring data on their websites so that progress in reducing their use can be tracked. The Environment Agency will compile this data into an annual report that is easily accessible to the public. This data is also being used at an operational level to prioritise the most frequent spills for further assessment by EA officers.
  - The Environment Agency has taken tough action against those companies which are breaking the rules:
    - In 2021 the Environment Agency concluded 7 prosecutions against water and sewerage companies with fines of £90 million, 2 of £4 million, £2.3 million, £1.5 million, £150,000, and £540,000. 6 prosecutions have already concluded in 2022 with fines of £1,600,750, £300,000, £240,000, £233,000, £50,000, and £18,000, and more prosecutions are progressing in court.
    - The Environment Agency has launched a major investigation into possible unauthorised spills at thousands of sewage treatment works.
    - We will always seek to hold those responsible for environmental harm to account.
- 

## [UK announces humanitarian assistance for 150,000 women and children suffering drought and conflict in Ethiopia](#)

- Minister for Development Vicky Ford uses a two-day visit to Ethiopia to urge for peace and pledge more support to victims of the drought affecting 24 million already vulnerable people
- support will provide hundreds of thousands of severely malnourished children, mothers and survivors of sexual violence with medical treatment, water, sanitation, basic education and mental health support
- Minister Ford will urge for an end to fighting for the sake of civilians, particularly in the north, facing violence and starvation

UK aid will help to protect women and children from the devastating impacts of violent conflict and the worst drought in 40 years in Ethiopia, Minister for Development Vicky Ford announced today [19 October] during a visit to the country.

With 24 million people affected by the drought in Ethiopia, the Minister will visit a UK-supported hospital where severely malnourished children under 5 receive life-saving treatment. The Minister will also visit a UK-funded school where children are able to get back to learning and receive mental health support after experiencing conflict and drought.

A new £14 million UK funding package is expected to reach up to 150,000 people with comprehensive health, water sanitation, hygiene and nutrition services; 50,000 people with emergency financial support and 20,000 pupils with emergency education. The funding will also protect children from violence and exploitation and provide women subject to sexual violence with mental health support.

Minister Ford made the announcement while on a two-day visit to Ethiopia to raise awareness of the impact of drought and armed conflict. She will meet with members of the Government of Ethiopia and will urge for an end to the ongoing conflict in Tigray, in northern Ethiopia, which has resulted in awful violence against civilians. The Minister will also address the conflict-related sexual violence suffered by women and girls in the region.

This is part of a wider £156 million UK commitment to humanitarian support for crises in East Africa this year.

Minister for Development, Vicky Ford said:

Ethiopia faces multiple pressing crises, including a catastrophic drought which has affected 24 million people. The escalation of fighting in northern Ethiopia has made an already dire situation even worse and left many extremely vulnerable, including women and girls.

We are a committed, long-standing partner to Ethiopia. We continue to provide life-saving healthcare, nutrition and water, which will be boosted by the £14 million funding which I have announced today.

We will continue to stand by the Ethiopian people and to call for peace. I urge the international community to act now to prevent the desperate humanitarian situation from deteriorating.

In the last 18 months, the UK has committed over £75 million of humanitarian aid to Ethiopia. This new funding brings this figure to nearly £90 million.

Last year in Ethiopia, UK funding provided nutritious food for over 200,000 malnourished women and children, provided emergency health supplies for 1 million people, provided clean water to over 200,000 people; and child protection services to over 40,000 children affected by conflict.

- the humanitarian context across the region is challenging with more than 68 million people facing high levels of food insecurity
  - Ethiopia, South Sudan and Somalia are all at risk famine
  - conflict, climate extremes including flooding and drought and the key drivers of suffering in the region. The poorest communities in East Africa are also bearing the brunt of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine which has contributed to price inflation for staple goods
  - the UK aims to allocate £156 million in humanitarian support across East Africa in financial year 2022 to 2023
- 

## [Human rights must remain the guiding light for our work at the UN: UK national statement at Third Committee](#)

Thank you, Chair, and just to start let me say what a pleasure it is to be back in the Third Committee where I started my UN career.

Mr Chair, seventy-seven years ago the first UN Member States signed the UN Charter, "determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" while "promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms".

Those principles have stood the test of time, and must remain the guiding light for our work at the UN and in the Third Committee. But regrettably, today, the world remains ridden with conflict. While suffering is most acute at the front lines, millions more are impacted by the secondary effects.

Since February, Russia has waged a war of aggression against Ukraine, displaying heinous butchery and wanton destruction. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine concluded that war crimes have been committed. Russia has deployed explosive weapons in populated areas, tortured those in unlawful confinement and some Russian soldiers have committed sexual and gender-based crimes, including against children.

In April, horrific images from Bucha and Irpin demonstrated the lengths Russia will go to to suppress dissent: merciless and deliberate killing of civilians. Russia's barbarism cannot be ignored by this Committee. Those responsible must be held to account.

Russia's gross and systematic violations of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law are well documented; and it was right that the General Assembly suspended Russia's membership of the Human Rights Council.

As Russia's human rights record further degrades, we also welcome the HRC's decision to examine Russia's repression of its own citizens. We must support

ordinary Russians who face brutal restrictions on fundamental freedoms. And we must recognise how this repression enables Russia's aggression abroad.

Mr Chair, we also remain deeply concerned by the situation of the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang. The former High Commissioner for Human Rights found evidence of arbitrary detention, torture, sexual and gender-based violence, forced sterilisations and abortions, and destruction of religious sites. The wealth of evidence led her to conclude that China's actions may constitute crimes against humanity. Rather than stifle debate and deny the findings, we urge China to implement the report's recommendations, including by allowing independent UN experts to conduct unrestricted visits to Xinjiang.

Such systemic discrimination only reaffirms the need for our collective commitment to freedom of religion or belief. Building mutual understanding and respect between communities is essential to fighting intolerance. In July, the UK hosted a Ministerial Conference on FoRB and will never stand by while individuals live in fear of discrimination, hostility or acts of violence because of their religion, belief, or ethnicity.

This pursuit of equality is central to the UK's human rights approach. Nowhere more so than in our efforts to advance gender equality through the protection and promotion of women's and girls' rights. We remain steadfast in respecting the bodily autonomy of women and girls as they exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. We must also increase efforts to prevent gender-based violence, and to eliminate harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriage.

We also remain deeply alarmed by the continued proliferation of conflict related sexual violence. Next month, the UK will host a Ministerial conference to highlight the best means to prevent CRSV, improve justice and accountability, and understand ways to better support survivors.

Mr Chair, we recognise the vital role of civil society in the promotion of human rights. The UK looks forward to joining the NGO Committee in January. Through our membership, we will continue to champion civil society participation, both in the field and in discussions at the UN.

Mr Chair, we can all do better to uphold our human rights obligations. We must act now and fight impunity wherever it may occur.