

Speech: International Security Conference – 27 March

It's a pleasure to open your conference today.

Our theme, international security, is a tragically timely one in light of last Wednesday's terrorist attack.

Little more than five minutes' walk from here...innocent people...not just from Britain...but from China, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Romania, South Korea and the United States...were mercilessly mown down.

Four innocent people lost their lives – including a brave police officer, PC Keith Palmer – who was guarding the gates of Parliament.

Dozens more were injured.

This was not just an attack on all of those people – but on the centre of our democracy and our way of life.

In the past few years our security services have thwarted over a dozen plots.

Tragically this one got through.

Yet, as those events unfolded, the British people showed their defiance.

The terrorists sought to divide us, they always seek to divide us.

But we are more united than ever in defending our way of life.

And in a few days' time...when our Prime Minister triggers Article 50 and we begin the process of leaving the European Union...we won't simply be strengthening our Parliamentary sovereignty...retaining control of our borders and our laws...we'll be becoming an even more Global Britain...standing up for British values and the international-rules based system...alongside our friends and allies.

And I'm proud that we can count our Commonwealth colleagues amongst the closest of our friends.

Over the next 12 months an event is taking place that will encapsulate that relationship...as the Queen's baton wends its way across the Commonwealth...en route to its destination on the Australian Gold Coast...where next year's Commonwealth Games are to be held.

During that time it will pass from hand to hand over 230,000 kilometres...before reaching its final destination.

I'm told there is a message inside the baton that will eventually be read out to all the competitors.

But the real message is in the medium.

For the baton shows that the diversity among our 52 nations...the differences between our 2 billion people...are transcended by the things we share...not just sport...but our values of freedom, justice and democracy.

One hundred years ago our nations...some of them fought shoulder to shoulder to defend those values...at the battles of Passchendaele and Arras – that we commemorate 100 years later this year.

During the Great War...those troops' heroism was remarkable. They were often volunteers. Fighting far from home.

And as chair of the Commonwealth War Graves commission...it's a huge source of pride to me...that we continue tending the final resting places of all the 1.7 million Commonwealth men and women...who died in two World Wars

Each grave identical...no distinction given to colour, or creed, or cap badge...because though their backgrounds differed...their cause was the same.

Yet the values they fought for in those two world wars remain under threat today.

From the home-grown Islamist terror we've seen in our capital and in cities across the world.

From Daesh in the Middle East...and from extremist franchises across Africa. From a nuclear armed North Korea in the Asia Pacific. From Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

Those dangers, as our 2015 Strategic Defence Review underlined, are growing in diversity, complexity and concurrence

Each of them poses a risk to the stability of the international rules-based order on which our security and prosperity depend. In the face of such dangers we're sticking to the roadmap set out in the SDSR.

Based around three key principles:

First, we are standing up for our democratic values.

When it comes to Daesh...calling out its extremist narrative...working with Islamic scholars to debunk its claims to legitimacy...and demonstrating to its potential followers...that their way is nothing but a dead end.

And when it comes to Russia...we're clear-eyed about a pattern of behaviour that is becoming more assertive and persistent.

We want Russia to change tack, abide by the Minsk agreements, to curb the reckless military activity, and to ditch the misinformation.

If it does, then there is the potential for a better relationship...In the meantime, we should 'engage but beware' as the PM has said.

But talking and engagement is not enough.

Our second principle is about strengthening our deterrence.

Deterrence is really about ensuring our adversaries know the benefits of any aggressive action are far outweighed by the costs.

So today we're investing our growing budget...not just in nuclear Dreadnought submarines...and conventional armaments from carriers and frigates to F35s and attack helicopters...but in new disruptive capabilities such as cyber.

Cyber I know is on your conference agenda for Friday. Just as it was on our SDSR agenda...as a Tier One threat...up there with terrorism or a major natural disaster.

Today our adversaries are increasingly turning to cyber.

So we're investing here £1.9 billion to develop cyber capabilities and skills across all government departments and setting up the new National Cyber Security Centre.

Our military cyber workforce is already among the best in the world – with cyber integrated into all three services.

But, in such a fast moving environment, we must continually enhance our skills.

Which is why, we're establishing the Defence Cyber School at Shrivenham in the autumn and standing up a Cyber Security Operations Centre at Corsham, in Wiltshire.

Forthcoming cyber exercises will also continue to test and improve their skills.

And this week Information Warrior 17 gets underway...with the Royal Navy launching its first large scale cyber war games...testing out a pioneering Artificial Intelligence...able to speed up complex decision making.

And we're not just interested in defensive but offensive cyber.

Those who threaten cyber attacks against us need to know the risk they're running.

So our National Offensive Cyber Planning is integrating cyber into our military offensive.

The third principle is the need to become international-by-design.

NATO remains the bedrock of our defence...and in the wake of multiple threats... has never been more important.

So we're not just meeting the Alliance target to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence...but we are reassuring our allies in the face of Russian aggression...by

leading the Very High Readiness Joint Taskforce...and continuing to support NATO's Air Policing mission.

For three years our fighters safeguarded Baltic airspace.

Today I can announce the legendary 3 (Fighter) Squadron...who earned their wings in two world wars...will now be deployed to Romania from May... this time to protect Black Sea skies.

3rd Squadron has a glorious history. 100 years ago it was a fighter scout unit assisting our forces in the trenches.

In World War 2 it was at the forefront of our air defences destroying nearly V1 flying bombs. More recently it took tours of Sierra Leone and Iraq during the second gulf war and it was the first frontline Squadron to be equipped with Typhoons which will now be leading our efforts to confront aggression...with the UK the first nation to provide jets to support this particular mission.

All the while, we're supporting NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence and last week dispatched troops to Estonia.

So our new force in Estonia will not just be working closely with Allies to provide reassurance but assisting NATO efforts to counter the misinformation of a "post-truth" age.

Next month, a British Army team, including Royal Navy and Air Force personnel, will participate in Exercise Locked Shield organised by the NATO Cyber Defence Centre in Tallinn...it is designed to see how an international team of experts can defend a simulated network from attack.

Now, all these actions are proportionate and defensive.

As well as assisting the Alliance to up its game we're also putting our high-tech skills at the disposal of the 68-nation Counter-Daesh coalition...so as well as striking terrorist targets and...cutting their finances...and stemming the flow of foreign fighters to Iraq and Syria...we're also tackling them in cyber space.

Partnerships are about more than stopping threats.

They are also about preventing them.

Early intervention in a local crisis can stop it turning to regional chaos.

That's why Britain is the only major country in the world meeting our NATO target and spending 0.7 per cent of GDP development.

And it's why 71 years ago after the first meeting of the UN Security Council took place in this hall the UK is helping make the UN fit for the 21st century.

Last year I invited 80 nations to London to improve UN peacekeeping.

We agreed to strengthen the organisation's planning...to improve performance of its peacekeepers...and honour individual pledges to provide more manpower and materiel.

And in the UK, we are practicing what we preach...sending troops to Somalia to support the fight against Al-Shabaab...and to South Sudan to build a hospital and assist ongoing humanitarian work.

All in addition to the work of our short-term training teams...who from Kuwait to Kenya are doing everything...from training local forces to protecting endangered species from poachers.

So we're strengthening our partnerships with NATO, the counter-Daesh Coalition, and the UN.

What of the Commonwealth?

We're working with many of you to front up to aggression.

We have numerous bi-lateral relationships...and our partnership with Commonwealth allies...as part of our Five Eyes Intelligence Alliance and our Five Powers Defence Arrangement

But for me the Commonwealth has an even bigger role.

Defence can banish despair in fragile nations. But the Commonwealth can do more than that.

It can bring hope.

I've had the great privilege to see some of the Commonwealth's work up close.

I've seen you fighting poverty...to support good governance...to devise innovative solutions to challenge climate change.

I've see you fighting for people's right to make a better life.

Putting into practice the values of the Commonwealth Charter of democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

And delivering on the commitment of all members to the development of free and democratic societies and the promotion of peace and prosperity to improve the lives of all peoples of the Commonwealth.

That ambitious vision depends on delivering the security and safety that our people deserve – and that depends on us all making and winning the argument that defence is vital in safeguarding our way of life.

So let me just say in conclusion, last week's terrorist attack wasn't the first time...we've seen an attack on what Winston Churchill once called "the

citadel of liberty”.

76 years ago Nazi bombs destroyed the Chamber in the House of Commons.

Yet the enemy couldn't touch the spirit of the British people...and while the great chamber of the Commons was rebuilt...we moved here, to this very hall.

As one of my Parliamentary colleagues said last week...nothing stops democracy.

So let's keep working together...Let us keep passing our baton of peace across the world...because in the fight against aggression... our greatest weapon remains democracy...and as Karl Popper once said:

“Only freedom can make security secure”.

News story: Improved mail service ensures loved ones can stay in touch

The new contract with Neopost will mean Britain's Armed Forces will continue to receive hard copy, secure mail, including photos, from their loved ones, for free and with no break in service as the new imail INtouch system takes over from the e-bluey on 1 April 2017.

The new imail INtouch system will allow users to send up to eight pages, including high definition photographs and official documents. The old e-bluey system that is being replaced only allowed single pages to be sent and did not support high definition photographs. Use of the e-bluey has dropped by 98% since 2007, with the same fixed cost, meaning it no longer provided value for money for the taxpayer.

With around 4000 personnel on over 20 operations around the world, communications are very important to personnel and their loved ones, especially for those who do not typically use electronic communications.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster said:

We are investing in a better mail service to make sure our Armed Forces can stay in touch with their loved ones for free when they are away from home.

Along with improved internet connections and global post deliveries, imail means families can now send longer messages and share higher quality photos than before with personnel serving around the world.

The MOD's new contract with Neopost will reflect actual usage and offer around half a million pounds worth of savings, which will be reinvested into welfare services like improved internet and Wi-Fi provision around the world.

By offering both secure internet calls, emails, a letter and parcel service, as well as the imail INTouch service, we have ensured that our personnel have a range of ways of keeping in touch with their loved ones while they are deployed.

Sara Baade, Chief Executive, Army Families Federation

It's good news that this service is being rolled out and there will not be a gap between e-Bluey ceasing and the new contract with Neopost beginning.

Communication with families whilst on operations is vital for morale and it is encouraging that this service will offer a raft of ways for families to stay in touch with their loved ones.

We will monitor this contract to make sure it is offering families the best service possible and we eagerly await news of how the reinvested money will be used to support Army welfare services around the world.

The MOD is committed to the welfare of its people and enshrined the Armed Forces Covenant in law, a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served, and their families, are treated fairly. Replacing the ageing e-bluey service is recognition of the fact that, to provide the best possible communication system for service personnel overseas, we must take advantage of the latest technology. This is why the funding for e-bluey is being redirected to imail INTouch and development of cutting-edge communications solutions.

News story: Broadband providers drop cancellation fees for Armed Forces personnel

The commitment from the UK's biggest broadband providers representing 95 per cent of Britain's broadband market comes into force immediately, and will benefit tens of thousands of Forces households in the UK and abroad.

The change agreed to under the tenets of the Armed Forces Covenant includes BT, Sky, EE, Plusnet, Talk Talk and Virgin Media, who have all committed to treating military personnel fairly when cancelling their contracts.

Up until now, members of the Armed Forces who are deployed overseas or to different parts of the UK not covered by their provider could be forced to pay a cancellation fee. They will no longer have to face this cost and be disadvantaged due to the mobile nature of service life.

Defence Minister Mark Lancaster, said:

Our Armed Forces are sent all over the world and across the country to help keep our country safe and they should never be at a disadvantage because of this. The removal of cancellation fees by leading broadband providers is yet another example of the Covenant in action, which is making sure our brave personnel are treated fairly. It's a welcome move and we're looking forward to seeing what more British businesses can do to support our military.

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise by the nation ensuring that those who serve or have previously served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and not disadvantaged by their service. Delivery partners include businesses and trade bodies, charities and community organisations, local authorities and government departments.

BT Chief Executive Gavin Patterson, said:

Armed Forces personnel play a vital role protecting our country, whether serving overseas or stationed away from home in other parts of the UK. That's why we're committed to ensuring they don't have to pay for broadband or TV services they can't access, when they find themselves in this situation. Whether it's through today's announcement, our hiring of ex-armed forces personnel, or through our work with Reservists, BT, along with our fellow signatories are proud to support our country's military personnel.

TalkTalk Chief Executive, Dido Harding, added:

We recognise that service personnel and their families face unique challenges, not least due to the fact they are regularly posted to new locations all over the country and abroad, often at short notice. TalkTalk was the first ISP to recognise how tricky this can be and offer free disconnections for service personnel moving overseas, and we're delighted that the rest of the industry has followed suit.

Today's announcement follows previous Covenant pledges by UK businesses to

support personnel when they are posted overseas.

Last year, the UK's largest insurers and brokers allowed personnel and their families posted abroad to keep their No Claims Bonus for up to three years, and also waived cancellation fees.

47 of the UK's high street banks and building societies also committed to letting personnel posted overseas and around the UK rent out their homes without facing higher mortgage costs or having to change to a buy-to-let mortgage.

[News story: UK's NATO Southern Air Policing Mission to begin in May](#)

Sir Michael also confirmed that four Typhoons from Royal Air Force 3 (Fighter) Squadron will lead the deployment.

The Defence Secretary agreed the UK's air policing contribution during NATO defence ministerial talks in the autumn and confirmed the timing of the deployment and squadron name at the International Parliamentary Conference on National Security in London today.

The Typhoons from RAF Coningsby will be based at Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in south east Romania for up to four months, working side-by-side with the Romanian Air Force to police the skies over the Black Sea.

Royal Air Force 3 (Fighter) Squadron has a long history. One hundred years ago it was a fighter scout unit assisting our forces in the trenches, in World War Two it was at the forefront of our air defences destroying nearly 300 V1 flying bomb. More recently it took tours of Sierra Leone and as part of Counter Daesh operations in Iraq and Syria.

The UK is the first nation to provide jets to this NATO mission, which forms part of the UK's increasing support to our Allies following the recent deployment of British troops to Estonia as part of NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence.

Secretary of State for Defence Sir Michael Fallon said:

The UK is stepping up its support for NATO's collective defence from the north to the south of the alliance. With this deployment, RAF planes will be ready to secure NATO airspace and provide reassurance to our allies in the Black Sea region.

During his speech the Defence Secretary addressed a range of national

security issues, including cyber where the UK is investing its growing Defence budget in new cyber capabilities.

This comes as the UK's cyber capabilities are tested in exercises, including Information Warrior 2017, the Royal Navy's first ever large-scale cyber war games, designed to test new Artificial Intelligence able to speed up complex decision making, which starts this week.

Sir Michael also confirmed that £1.9 billion will be invested in developing cyber capabilities and skills across all Government departments, in addition to establishing the new National Cyber Security Centre, the Defence Cyber School at Shrivenham, and a Cyber Operations Centre at Corsham.

Sir Michael added:

Our military is among the best prepared in the world to tackle cyber threats – with capabilities and skills integrated into the Army, Royal Navy, and the RAF. But in such a dynamic environment we must continually test and enhance our skills.

We're interested not just in defensive but also in offensive cyber – those who threaten cyber-attacks against us need to know the risk they're running.

During the speech at Church House the Defence Secretary also paid tribute to those who lost their lives during last week's attack in Westminster.

Royal Air Force will deploy to Romania

Royal Air Force will deploy to Romania

Royal Air Force

Typhoon aircraft based at RAF Coningsby Lincolnshire will be deploying this summer to Romania as part of the UK's commitment to NATO.

The Typhoon

multi-role fighters and support personnel will be based at the Mihail Kogalniceanu Airbase in southeast Romania for four months working with the Romanian Air Force to conduct the NATO mission.

To support and

establish the operation, the Logistics Squadron at RAF Coningsby has already started

packing all the equipment needed to sustain the mission, from specialist

vehicles,
spare parts to tool boxes.



Flight

Lieutenant Mark Taylor said: "The Squadron has been very busy already supporting this mission. We enable the operations to go ahead by ensuring the equipment is available for the jets to operate. We do that here at RAF Coningsby but we also deploy to anywhere in the world when needed."

Specialist

personal from the RAF Leeming based 90 Signals Unit are also deploying to provide access to the mission critical intelligence and NATO command information the pilots will need to carry out their missions.

No 2 Mechanical

Transport Squadron from RAF Wittering has already been busy moving over 100 Tons of essential freight to Romania, and are now preparing to transport even more equipment ready for it to be loaded at the Marchwood Military Port in Hampshire over the coming weeks.



The UK is the

first nation to provide jets to support the NATO mission in Romania. The RAF's lead planner for the mission Group Captain Pip Harding OBE RAF said: "With this mission, the RAF once again will be demonstrating its ability to plan, deploy and operate at the heart of the NATO Alliance. Equipped with state of the art fighters, the RAF continues to make a significant contribution to NATO, and in so doing sends a clear message to our Romanian friends that we stand alongside them in our ongoing commitment to the defence of NATO Airspace."

Editor: Jim Robinson

© MOD Crown Copyright 2017

[Let's block ads! \(Why?\)](#)