



DEBATE PACK

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Anglo-Polish relations

Westminster Hall

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Debate initiated by Daniel Kawczynski

The proceedings of this debate can be viewed on Parliamentlive.tv

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1. Introduction

There is a significant Polish Community in the UK. The latest figures from the Office of National Statistics state that in 2015 an estimated 831,000 residents of the UK were born in Poland, and an estimated 916,000 residents in the UK have Polish nationality.¹

A 2013 analysis of the 2011 census conducted by the ONS reported that Polish was the second most spoken language in England after English, with 546,000 people (1% of the population) describing it as their main language.²

As well as Polish nationals who have come to the UK since Poland joined the EU in 2004, there already existed a significant Polish community who came to the UK around the period of the Second World War. The 1951 UK census showed the number of Polish-born immigrants had quadrupled since before the war, to more than 160,000.³

Relations between Poland and the United Kingdom are strong. In July 2016 The Prime Minister Theresa May travelled to Poland to meet the Polish Prime Minister Beata Szydło. They agreed to press on with the commitment made by the then Prime Minister David Cameron in December 2015, to hold annual bilateral summits between the two countries. Theresa May also commented that “co-operation on security and defence is one of the most important areas of our growing strategic relationship.”

In December 2016 the inaugural UK-Poland intergovernmental consultations were held in London; it was the first time the two governments had held a ‘structured, comprehensive dialogue at Cabinet level.’ They agreed a series of collaborative measures in defence, foreign policy, security, the economy and business, science and innovation. Examples included:

- the bilateral deployment of around 150 UK armed service personnel to Poland within enhanced Forward Presence
- agreement to sign a defence cooperation treaty
- strengthening of UK/Polish industry cooperation
- coordinating opportunities to support the growth of UK and Polish small businesses
- a showcase of UK-Polish research collaboration and increased academic exchange
- ongoing cooperation to tackle global challenges including energy security, counter terrorism and cyber crime

They also agreed alongside these steps to:

Broaden and deepen our country-to-country dialogue through establishing an annual British-Polish Civil Society Forum in 2017. This will bring together a wide range of non-governmental actors,

¹ [‘Population of the UK by Country of Birth and Nationality: 2015’](#), ONS, 25 August 2016

² [‘Language in England and Wales: 2011’](#), ONS, 4 March 2013

³ [‘How Britain and Poland came to be intertwined’](#), BBC News, 1 September 2014

including UK and Polish businesses, academia, and think-tanks, as well as well as the vibrant Polish community in the UK.⁴

Relations between the two governments are further cemented by the fact that the Polish President and Prime Minister's Law and Justice party (PiS) sits as part of the same party group – the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)- as the British Conservative party in the European Parliament.

As a sign of the growing relationship between the two countries, on 3 July 2017 it was announced that their Royal Highnesses The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge will undertake an official tour to Poland and Germany between the 17th and 21st July.

1.1 Defence issues

Poland hosted the NATO summit in 2016 at which the Alliance agreed to deploy multinational battalions in Poland and the three Baltic States. The US is contributing 150 troops from [Light Dragoons](#) to the US-led battlegroup in Orzysz, Poland (the UK is separately leading the battlegroup in Estonia). This [Enhanced Forward Presence](#) (EFP) is [designed](#) to act both as a deterrent to Russia and to reassure those states of NATO's commitment to collective defence. The Light Dragoons, with Jackal and Coyote light reconnaissance vehicles, will be [based](#) in Poland for at least six months, when they will be replaced by another unit. The UK has also committed 1,000 personnel to NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force when it is led by Poland in 2020 (the UK is leading the VJTF in 2017). In addition, NATO has established a Multinational Corps Northeast [Headquarters](#) in Szczecin which is on permanent stand-by to take the lead in land combat operations across north-eastern Europe if needed. The US is currently building a land-based [missile defence installation](#) (the Aegis ashore missile defence system) in Poland which should come online in 2018. Poland will [continue](#) to spend 2% of GDP to defence in 2018.

⁴ ['UK-Poland intergovernmental consultations: Joint Communiqué'](#), Foreign Office, 2 December 2016.

2. Press and Media Articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to the debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

80% of Britain's 1.4m eastern European residents are in work

The Guardian

10 July 2017

Alan Travis

The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to visit Poland and Germany

Royal.uk

3 July 2017

The UK-based Polish entrepreneurs unbowed by Brexit

Financial Times

21 June 2017

Zosia Wasik

Tusk adds voice to calls for greater EU control over Nord Stream 2

Financial Times

5 June 2017

Rochelle Toplensky

Enhancing NATO's Forward Presence

Carnegie Europe

27 April 2017

John R. Deni

Poland's Kaczynski Wants Alliance of Pro-UK Countries to Lead Brexit Negotiations

Bribart.com

7 February 2017

Jack Montgomery

Russia says US troops arriving in Poland pose threat to its security

The Guardian

12 January 2017

Ewen MacAskill

Poland & Great Britain - A Special Relationship

Shrewsbury & Atcham Conservative Association

6 December 2016

Daniel Kawczynski

Poland PM and Theresa May discuss teaching Polish in UK schools

The Guardian

28 November 2016

Anushka Asthana

Poland presses EU on Russian gas pipeline

EU Observer

21 October 2016

Andrew Rettman and Aleksandra Eriksson

Germany and the V4 states cannot afford not to cooperate closely

Visegrad Insight

16 December 2016

Jörg Winterbauer

France, Germany to put EU defence plan to sceptical partners

Reuters

27 September 2016

Sun, sea, sand and Sopot, a taste of Poland's Riviera

The Guardian

14 September 2016

Kamil Tchorek

US and Germany say no to Poland on Nato base

EU Observer

16 April 2016

Andrew Rettman

Poland, courting NATO, plans to boost Middle East military involvement

Reuters

9 February 2016

Wiktor Szary and Justyna Pawlak

3. Press releases

UK personnel arrive in Poland and Estonia

Ministry of Defence

5 April 2017

The British Army's Light Dragoons have arrived in Poland as part the UK commitment to NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence in Eastern Europe, taking the total deployment in the region to nearly 1,000.

Supporting the US led battle group in Poland, 150 UK personnel have travelled from their base in Catterick Garrison to arrive this week in Orzysz, Poland in Jackal and Coyote light reconnaissance vehicles.

The regiment will be based in Poland for at least six months, when they will be replaced by another unit to carry on our enduring commitment to the region.

Meanwhile the arrival of the remaining UK personnel into Estonia this week, forming part of a nearly 800-strong British-led battle group, means nearly 1000 troops are providing deterrence in Eastern Europe.

Soldiers from 5 Rifles battle group, based in Bulford, Wiltshire and The Queen's Royal Hussars, based in Paderborn, Germany, have travelled to Estonia to work under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wilson.

The commitments in the Baltic region will be augmented by the deployment of RAF Typhoon aircraft to Romania later this year, to carry out a NATO Air Policing mission in the Black Sea.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

"The UK is stepping up its support for NATO's collective defence through our deployments across the alliance.

"British personnel are playing a leading role in NATO: delivering deterrence and defence in Estonia and Poland and air policing in Romania underlines our commitment to the security of Europe."

On Monday, Defence Minister Earl Howe, joined by His Excellency Mr Lauri Bambus, Estonian Ambassador, bade farewell to Estonia-bound personnel at RAF Brize Norton.

Defence Minister Earl Howe said:

"The men and women of 5 Rifles have travelled to Estonia as a part of the biggest reinforcement of NATO's collective defence in a generation, standing by our allies and working closely with forces from across the Alliance."

The final UK vehicles also departed Marchwood, UK last week, carrying nearly 200 vehicles including Warriors and Panthers vehicles.

Last week also saw two trains carrying French vehicles arrive in Tapa, Estonia, supporting the UK-led battalion.

Minister for Europe visits Poland

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
8 March 2017

Sir Alan Duncan will attend the first ever Polish-British Belvedere Forum, which brings together experts from both countries to discuss future relations, and deliver a speech to its official opening.

He will also hold talks with Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski, and Defence Under-Secretary of State Tomasz Szatkowski, where they will discuss European security and defence, NATO and UK-Poland ties.

Sir Alan said:

“The UK and Poland enjoy a close and enduring relationship. Our shared history is important. But our shared future matters even more.

The first ever Polish-British Belvedere Forum is a clear demonstration of that closeness, and will encourage, accelerate and deepen our ties.

I am proud that we have a dynamic Polish community in the UK – which is important to all of us – and I look forward to continuing to develop our close relationship on my trip to Warsaw.

We are leaving the EU, but we are not leaving Europe, and my message to our friends and allies in Poland is that we want to build a real partnership, and maintain the strongest possible links, including through a bold and ambitious free trade agreement with the EU.”

The Belvedere Forum, which takes place tomorrow [March 9], is a new annual event that brings together more than 100 British and Polish experts from business, academia, media and politics to discuss opportunities, interests and cooperation between our two countries.

The UK and Poland governments agreed to establish the Belvedere Forum in 2016. This year’s forum, the first of its kind, will look at British-Poland relations up to 2025, and takes place at the prestigious Belvedere Palace in Warsaw.

Joint Communiqué of the Visegrad Group Ministers of Defence

Visegrad Group
2 February 2017

We, the Ministers of Defence of the Visegrad Group (V4) met in Niepołomice, Poland. We discussed the wide range of issues pertinent to our security and defense, took stock of our cooperation under the Polish V4 Presidency and set a guidance on its further development.

- We agreed on the need to fully implement the NATO Warsaw Summit decisions, including on the strengthening of the Eastern Flank. We re-confirmed the importance of the enhanced Forward Presence for the more effective deterrence and defence of NATO.

- We discussed the V4 contribution to the NATO Assurance Measures for the Baltic States in 2017. It has already started with the Czech deployment in Lithuania, which will be followed by Slovak deployment

in Latvia in the second quarter, Hungarian deployment in Estonia in third quarter and Poland's deployment in Latvia in fourth quarter.

- We agreed that possible V4 eFP contribution will be considered in due time. We tasked our Chiefs of the General Staffs to present by June 2017 initial recommendations for further V4 contribution to the security of the Baltic States.

- We agreed that the establishment of the Multinational Division North East HQ in Elbląg in Poland will strengthen NATO effectiveness in undertaking collective defence tasks on the Eastern Flank. Poland is grateful for the readiness of its V4 partners to contribute significantly to MNDNE HQ.

- We identified the 2020 rotation of the NATO VJTF under the Polish command as an important opportunity for V4 to tighten its cooperation. The Czech Republic confirmed its readiness to make a substantial contribution to it.

- We stressed that the recent deployment of the US Armoured Brigade Combat Team to Poland is of importance for ensuring the security of the entire region and the strength of the transatlantic link. We agreed that the training opportunities offered by the ABCT widen the scope of practical military cooperation among the Armed Forces of the V4 countries. We tasked our Chiefs of General Staffs to make proposals on how to take this forward by June 2017.

- We also stressed the importance of tackling challenges stemming from the South and supported NATO's related activities in light of its 360 degree approach. Hungary reiterated its gratitude to the V4 countries for their practical assistance in addressing illegal migration.

- We expressed our support for the further development of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy and agreed it should address the security challenges for all the EU members in an effective manner and strengthen NATO at the same time.

- We expressed gratitude to our soldiers for the successful standby of the V4 EU Battle Group with Poland as a framework nation in 2016. Its robust composition and the establishment of the Operational Headquarters in Kraków proved V4 readiness and ability to contribute to multinational formations. We expressed our appreciation for preparations for the next V4 EU Battle Group in 2019 which have already started.

UK-Poland intergovernmental consultations: Joint Communiqué

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
2 December 2016

The UK and Poland have long been, and remain, the strongest of allies. We fought together in the defence of freedom and democracy in Europe through the 20th century, maintaining the close links between our peoples through the Cold War and since.

With almost 1 million Poles now living and working in the UK, we enjoy unparalleled people-to-people contact at all levels. It was an honour and a pleasure to meet some of them at today's reception at No 10 Downing Street. Our ministers already meet regularly and work hand in glove across a broad spectrum of policy areas. Today, as a demonstration of our shared commitment to take this cooperation even further, we, the Prime Ministers of the UK and Poland, chaired the inaugural British-Polish intergovernmental consultations in London: the first time our 2 governments have held such a structured, comprehensive dialogue at Cabinet level.

In the first of what will be an annual meeting of our governments, alternating between Poland and the UK, we have agreed a comprehensive programme of collaboration in defence, foreign policy, security, the economy and business, science and innovation. Examples of this collaboration include:

- the bilateral deployment of around 150 UK armed service personnel to Poland within enhanced Forward Presence
- agreement to sign a defence cooperation treaty
- strengthening of UK/Polish industry cooperation
- coordinating opportunities to support the growth of UK and Polish small businesses
- a showcase of UK-Polish research collaboration and increased academic exchange
- ongoing cooperation to tackle global challenges including energy security, counter terrorism and cyber crime

Alongside the cooperation between our 2 governments we have also agreed to broaden and deepen our country-to-country dialogue through establishing an annual British-Polish Civil Society Forum in 2017. This will bring together a wide range of non-governmental actors, including UK and Polish businesses, academia, and think-tanks, as well as the vibrant Polish community in the UK.

When we met in Warsaw last July, we agreed that we wanted to transform our strong partnership into a great, strategic relationship. Today's intergovernmental consultations give effect to this commitment and we look forward to meeting in Poland for the second round of intergovernmental consultations in 2017.

Polish-British intergovernmental consultations start in London on Monday

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
28 November 2016

Prime Minister Beata Szydło and her cabinet members are going to London on Monday for Polish-British consultations. They will be discussing the implementation of NATO decisions and issues relating to

Poles living in the UK. Szydło and the British chief of government Theresa May will also meet with the Polish community in Britain.

Poland's prime minister will be accompanied on her London visit by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Development and Finance Mateusz Morawiecki, Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski, MoD chief Antoni Macierewicz, Minister of the Interior and Administration Mariusz Błaszczak, Deputy Minister of Family, Labour, and Social Policy Stanisław Szwed and Deputy Minister of Science Łukasz Szumowski.

"These are going to be the first ever Polish-British intergovernmental consultations. They will open a new format of cooperation between Poland and the United Kingdom," Government Spokesman Rafał Bochenek told PAP. He added that until now Great Britain has only held intergovernmental consultations with France. The initiative to hold this meeting came from the Polish chief of government during Prime Minister Theresa May's visit to Warsaw in July.

The chiefs of both governments will hold intergovernmental consultations and meet with Poles living in the British Isles.

The first stop during the visit will be Polish War Memorial in Northold, which commemorates 303 Polish Fighter Squadron pilots, where Szydło and May will lay wreaths.

Deputy Foreign Minister Konrad Szymański told PAP that the focus of Monday's talks will be international security issues relating to the implementation of Warsaw NATO Summit decisions. "Great Britain, irrespective of its latest decisions, will play an absolutely key role in this organisation," underscored the MFA deputy minister

According to Szymański there are no reasons why the EU should close itself to cooperation in the area of security with Great Britain once its membership of the EU ceases. He went on to say that joint activities should be sustained in security policy turned inwards – towards fighting terrorism and trans-border crime – and in its external dimension, as well as in the field of development policy. "Here we also have a share interest to prevent the spread of instability," noted Szymański.

The talks will cover issues relating to Poles living in the British Isles.

"There will be many issues to discuss dealing with social insurance, the coordination of social systems, which are not necessarily connected with Brexit," said Szymański.

The process of Great Britain leaving the EU has not started yet; it will be triggered by an official notification of the UK's intention to leave the EU which the British government announced will happen by March 2017.

"Until Great Britain notifies its intention to leave the UK, there is no readiness to negotiate the terms of its EU exit. We, in particular, are not prepared to negotiate these terms separately. Our expectations have to be reflected in a common EU mandate. Only in this way can we hope to enhance Poland's position vis-à-vis London. This is the overriding principle that applies to the Brexit process," said Szymański. "There is no room for negotiations prior to notification, and no room for bilateral negotiations," he went on to add.

According to Szymański, Poland will have a better chance at securing its interests if they become part and parcel of the relevant overall EU strategy. In his opinion, Poland has already gained a lot, its interests are well reflected in the EU's expectations of Brexit today.

The purpose of the London visit "is not to address issues that are directly connected with Brexit, even though it does take place in the context of Brexit and of course this context is inevitable. The issue will keep coming back to us" said the deputy foreign minister.

"However, no matter what happens with Brexit, we have to maintain an ongoing and close contact with the British government administration because we want to guarantee the highest possible level of protection of the rights of Poles who have decided to live, work, and study in Britain," he stressed.

According to Szymański, the Polish government expects the British government, still before the start of Brexit talks, to ensure legal security to those persons who have decided to live in the UK. He believes that today London has a much better understanding of these expectations. "The British government understands that it would be good if no one becomes hostage to political processes, neither the citizens of the 27 EU member states nor the UK citizens living in the Continent," said the deputy foreign minister.

"Sometimes Poles living in the UK feel uncertain about their personal safety," added the deputy foreign minister. "It's hard to blame the government for incidents of social or hooligan nature, which we also must address together," he stressed.

4. PQs

NATO: Estonia and Poland

10 July 2017 | 627 cc4-6

Asked by: Tom Tugendhat and Daniel Kawczynski

What contribution the Government are making to NATO's reassurance measures in Estonia and Poland.

Answered by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

The United Kingdom is supporting NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, which is designed to defend our allies and deter our adversaries. About 800 UK personnel based on armoured infantry form the core of our battlegroup in Estonia. In Poland, a British reconnaissance squadron is part of the US-led battlegroup. Both deployments are defensive but combat-capable.

Asked by: Tom Tugendhat

I am sure that my right hon. Friend welcomed, as I did, the congressional vote that renewed the United States' commitment to article 5. Will my right hon. Friend say a little about Britain's commitment to it, particularly in relation to units such as the Estonian armed forces, alongside whom I—and many other Members—had the privilege to serve in, for instance, Afghanistan?

Answered by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

It is good that both Congress and, now, the President have committed themselves to article 5, the most important principle of NATO. In Washington on Friday, Secretary Mattis and I agreed to continue our work together to modernise NATO and give it more focus on counter-terrorism and hybrid warfare. As my hon. Friend has said, one of the reasons that our contribution to the enhanced Forward Presence is based in Estonia is indeed our good experience of working with Estonian forces in Helmand, Afghanistan.

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

Joint military exercises in the Suwalki gap are obviously very welcome, as are rotational deployments of troops in Poland, but when will the United Kingdom use its senior position in NATO to press that organisation for a permanent NATO base in eastern Poland?

Asked by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

Our defence relationship with Poland is close. Since the beginning of 2016 I have met Minister Macierewicz at least five times, and we aim to sign a defence treaty with Poland later this year. NATO, of course, already has a small permanent base in Poland, the Multinational Corps Northeast headquarters in Szczecin, to which the United Kingdom contributes personnel.

Asked by: Vernon Coaker

I very much support what the Defence Secretary has said about the contribution that we are making in respect of NATO in Estonia and Poland, but having spoken to a couple of constituents at the weekend, I believe that the Government, and all of us, have a job of work to do to

explain to the British public the importance of NATO and the continuing need for us to be vigilant in eastern Europe.

Answered by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

I absolutely agree. We need to keep restating the case for NATO, and it is sometimes sad to see the case for it being questioned. We must restate its importance. It was good to hear the President reinforce that in his speech in Warsaw on Friday, but I think that all of us in the House have a responsibility to explain why our troops are being deployed to Poland and Estonia, why our Typhoons are based in Romania this summer, and why we are committing Royal Navy ships to the standing maritime groups this year.

Asked by: Bridget Phillipson

One of the biggest threats facing all NATO member states is the growing sophistication and volume of cyber-attacks. What collective action are the Secretary of State and his colleagues taking to counter that threat?

Answered by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

As I said, Secretary Mattis and I have agreed that NATO needs to prioritise its work on cyber and other forms of hybrid warfare, which is just as important as its conventional deployments. We are now doing that; that work was agreed in principle at the Warsaw summit a year ago, and we continue to urge other members to do that, too. In addition, we have offered to put Britain's offensive cyber capabilities at the service of NATO, if required.

Asked by: Dr Julian Lewis

These deployments are certainly defensive, as the Secretary of State stated, but they will be represented as offensive by the Russians. What measures are the Government taking to keep open a line of communication with the Russians, to make it absolutely clear to them that this would not be happening but for their own conduct in Ukraine and elsewhere?

Answered by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

NATO is, as my right hon. Friend knows, a defensive alliance and these deployments are defensive in nature. It is important in respect of Russia that we explain these deployments and the purpose of them, and we are transparent about the number of personnel and the units involved. To that end, we already have machinery in place whereby our vice-chief of the defence staff has regular discussions with his opposite number to explain the deployments and ensure that there is no misunderstanding about them.

Asked by: Stewart Malcolm McDonald

As this is the first Defence questions of the new Parliament, may I begin by putting on record the Scottish National party's welcome for the announcement on Type 26s, and also welcome the fact that Scotland is, of course, the only part of the UK that can build these complex ships?

On the issue of cyber, what is the Secretary of State's assessment of what the President of America tweeted at the weekend on the idea of

an impenetrable cyber security unit? What would that mean for a country such as Estonia, for NATO, and for the United Kingdom?

Answered by: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

I will take for what it is the hon. Gentleman's welcome for Type 26, on which there is a later question on the Order Paper. Of course, if the SNP had had its way on the nuclear deterrent we would not be needing the Type 26 frigates at all, because they are designed to protect a deterrent that the SNP voted against.

We have cyber expertise in this country, as do Estonia and other countries inside the alliance; we now need to bring that expertise together to counter the cyber-attacks made by our adversaries

Baltic States: NATO

18 April 2017 | HL6656

Asked by: Lord Campbell of Pittenweem

To ask Her Majesty's Government what measures they have taken against attempts to undermine by disinformation the effectiveness of the British troops deployed to the Baltic States as part of the NATO alliance Enhanced Forward Presence initiative.

Answering member: Earl Howe | Ministry of Defence

The UK and NATO constantly monitor the threats to the Euro-Atlantic security environment. The Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) we have deployed to the Baltic States and Poland is defensive in nature, but combat capable, and we will configure our forces appropriately in response to the challenges NATO faces in the region. The effectiveness of UK involvement in this operation is founded upon our longstanding engagement and interoperability with NATO, our host nations of Estonia and Poland, our EFP partners, the US, Denmark, and France. Any attempts to undermine this deployment through disinformation will be countered in an open, honest, and transparent fashion.

Engagements

29 March 2017 | 624 c242

Asked by: Victoria Atkins

The Royal Air Force is preparing to fly Typhoons from RAF Coningsby in my constituency to Romania to support our NATO allies on the border with Russia. That is happening as President Putin is locking up his political opponents and crushing calls for democracy. Will my right hon. Friend confirm that, as we leave the European Union, the United Kingdom will continue to lead NATO in defending that vital border, and will she pay tribute to the members of the armed forces who safeguard our democracy at home and abroad?

Answering member: The Prime Minister

I am very happy to join my hon. Friend in paying tribute to the men and women of our armed forces. They are the best in the world. They work tirelessly to keep us safe, and we owe them every gratitude for doing so. I can also assure her that our commitment to collective defence and

security through NATO is as strong as ever. We will meet our NATO pledge to spend 2% of GDP on defence in every year of this decade, and we plan to spend £178 billion on the equipment plan to 2025.

My hon. Friend referred to the work being done by the Royal Air Force in relation to Romania. With NATO, we are deploying a battalion to Estonia and a reconnaissance squadron to Poland, and I think that shows our very clear commitment to our collective security and defence.

Bilateral Relations: Poland

28 March 2017 | 624 cc108-110

Asked by Ben Howlett and Caroline Ansell

What recent assessment he has made of the strength of relations between Poland and the UK.

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

British-Polish relations are strong and getting stronger. The inaugural intergovernmental consultations last November were a firm demonstration of our commitment. I was delighted to launch the first Belvedere civil society forum earlier this month in Warsaw with the Polish Foreign Minister and many others.

Asked by Ben Howlett

Given this Government's proud record of tackling modern slavery, does my right hon. Friend welcome the UK, Poland and Lithuania modern slavery conference, held in Warsaw in March, as a signal of how we can work together to strengthen the fight against human trafficking and modern slavery?

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Prime Minister has rightly called this

“the great human rights issue of our time”.

The Home Office-funded conference to which my hon. Friend referred, and the workshop that went with it, was the culmination of an intense period of Government activity. As a result of the workshop, we have strengthened regional co-operation to tackle modern slavery in central and eastern Europe.

Asked by: Caroline Ansell

Does my right hon. Friend agree that the Belvedere forum is a sign of our high-level engagement with Poland and a signal that it is entirely possible to have constructive and cordial discussions with our European friends, even as Brexit is being discussed?

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan

It was exactly that. I am pleased to say that more than 120 people attended, including leading representatives of UK-Polish businesses, along with representatives from universities and think tanks,

Parliaments, media outlets, cultural institutions and, indeed, the Polish diaspora from the UK.

Asked By: Catherine McKinnell

In the wake of Brexit, I have been left deeply concerned by the rise in hate crime and the subsequent insecurity felt by our Polish communities. I was very saddened to read a report in a local newspaper of a Polish-born mother in the north-east saying that when she speaks Polish to her daughter,

“I can’t guarantee I would feel safe.”

Will the Minister clarify what steps he is taking with his Polish counterparts to reassure Polish communities that hate crime is not acceptable and will not be tolerated in the UK?

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Following an absolutely deplorable spike just after the referendum, I am pleased to say that the number of reported crimes has significantly declined. We have been working very closely with our Polish counterparts, reassuring them at every conceivable opportunity. Indeed, we did so very publicly at the Belvedere forum.

Asked By: Alex Salmond

The Polish community constitutes the largest component of EU nationals in the UK and by far the largest percentage in Scotland. The Minister of State and, indeed, the Foreign Secretary have in previous incarnations been known for their cosmopolitan, pro-immigration attitudes. Can the Minister think of anything on the eve of Brexit that would better enhance the relationship going into negotiations than to unilaterally and immediately consolidate the position of the 3 million EU nationals in this country? Is not that something the Government should do now?

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I am confident that when the starting gun for Brexit is fired tomorrow, the issue mentioned by the right hon. Gentleman will be an essential part of the negotiations that will then follow.

Asked by: Dr Julian Lewis

Does the Minister believe that Poland deserves congratulations, as a frontline state against an increasingly fractious Russia, on being one of only five NATO members to meet the minimum level of 2% expenditure of GDP? Does he think it would send a good signal to Russia if the Foreign Secretary were to throw his considerable weight behind perhaps a Polish candidate to be the next Secretary-General of NATO, rather than a member of the comfortable club of the usual suspects?

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

If I might say so, the manner in which my right hon. Friend expressed his views was characteristic of him. I am confident that, even though we are going to leave the European Union, the United Kingdom will remain

a force for good in the defence and security of eastern Europe, and we will increase our engagement on all levels.

Asked by: Khalid Mahmood

Has the Minister received the same representation as we have from the Polish and other European embassies on the difficulties that many EU nationals are having with the 85-page form that they have to complete in order to apply for permanent residency in the UK? Has he relayed those concerns to the Home Office? [Interruption.] The Secretary of State does not even know about it. In that case, will the Minister, the Secretary of State and perhaps my right hon. Friend the Member for Islington South and Finsbury (Emily Thornberry), the shadow Secretary of State, accept my challenge and try to fill in the form and see how they get on?

Answered by: Sir Alan Duncan | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

I have to say that I have not received such representations, but I look forward to raising the matter myself when I next see the Polish ambassador, as I do on regular occasions.

Overseas Investment: Poland
22 March 2017 | 67985

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

To ask the Secretary of State for International Trade, what the total British foreign direct investment in Poland was in each of the last four years.

Answering member: Mark Garnier | Department for International Trade

The value of UK Direct Investment Stock in Poland in each of the last four

	2012	2013	2014	2015
Value of UK direct investment stock in Poland (£million)	4,053	4,585	4,974	5,999

Source: Office for National Statistics, FDI Involving UK Companies 2015

Notes: 1. Data on a 'directional' basis

2. Data for 2016 will be published in December 2017

NATO
13 March 2017 | 623 c4

Asked by: Derek Twigg

When the Secretary of State had discussions with his US counterparts, did he talk about NATO's capability to deal with any threat from Russia in the Baltics and elsewhere?

Answering member: Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

This is the year in which NATO is deploying its enhanced forward presence. I am proud that Britain is leading that deployment in Estonia. The first wave of our troops will leave for Estonia this week, and we will also be deploying in Poland and Romania. The best way to reassure our NATO allies and to deter any Russian aggression is for NATO to stand up.

NATO Spending Target

13 March 2017 | 623 c10

Asked by: Nigel Huddleston

Will the Minister name which NATO allies do not currently spend 2% of GDP on defence? What reasons or excuses have they given for that?

Answering member: Harriett Baldwin | Ministry of Defence

Listing the 23 that do not spend 2% would take too long, but I reassure my hon. Friend that the five that do meet the target are the United States, the UK, Poland, Greece and Estonia. I am sure he can deduce from that the absentees.

Eastern Europe: Armed Forces

07 March 2017 | HL5669

Asked by: Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Earl Howe on 30 January (HL Deb, col 969), whether the Armed Forces have the capacity to increase the number of troops stationed in Estonia and Poland.

Answering member: Earl Howe | Ministry of Defence

The UK and NATO constantly monitor the threats to the Euro-Atlantic security environment. The Enhanced Forward Presence we are deploying to the Baltic States and Poland is defensive in nature, but combat capable, and we will configure our forces appropriately in response to the challenges we face in the region. This may include adjusting the size and composition of our contributions over time.

Eastern Europe: Armed Forces

07 March 2017 | HL5668

Asked by: Lord Touhig

To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the answer by Earl Howe on 30 January (HL Deb, col 969), whether the defensive deployment of British forces in Estonia and Poland is being kept under review.

Answering member: Earl Howe | Ministry of Defence

The UK and NATO constantly monitor the threats to the Euro-Atlantic security environment. The Enhanced Forward Presence we are deploying to the Baltic States and Poland is defensive in nature, but combat capable, and we will configure our forces appropriately in response to

the challenges we face in the region. This may include adjusting the size and composition of our contributions over time.

NATO

06 March 2017 | HL5589

Asked by: Lord Blencathra

To ask Her Majesty's Government, in the light of current instability in parts of Eastern Europe, what consideration they have given to calling for NATO headquarters to be moved to a frontline state such as Poland.

Answering member: Baroness Anelay of St Johns | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

There are already NATO Headquarters in this region. At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO Allies agreed that Multi-National Divisional Headquarters North East, based in Elblag in Poland, would co-ordinate the activities of the Enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroups that NATO is deploying to the Baltic States and Poland. In addition, NATO's Multi-National Corps North East Headquarters, capable of commanding operations, is located in Szczecin in Poland, and NATO Force Integration Units are located in all three Baltic States and Poland.

NATO Assurance Measures: Estonia and Poland

30 January 2017 | 620 cc647-8

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

What deployments the UK is making as part of NATO's assurance measures in Estonia and Poland.

Answered by: Mike Penning | Ministry of Defence

The UK has a leading role in NATO's enhanced forward presence. In Estonia, we are providing the framework battalion of around 800 military personnel, which is based around 5th Battalion the Rifles, an armoured infantry unit from Bulford that is equipped with Warrior armoured fighting vehicles. The battle group will also have Challenger 2 tanks from the Queen's Royal Hussars and tactical unmanned aerial vehicles.

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

Our Polish partners and allies will obviously appreciate such rotational deployments, but the Minister will know that they are keen to have a permanent NATO base east of Warsaw. Can he envisage that happening during the course of this Parliament?

Answered by: Mike Penning | Ministry of Defence

I had the pleasure of meeting my Polish counterpart only the other week. Not only did we discuss the deployment of 150 personnel and Jackal vehicles from the Light Dragoons, but I congratulated them on their spending 2% of GDP on defence. I heard what they said about NATO, but that is a matter for our NATO colleagues.

Asked by: Barry Sheerman

I learned a great deal about NATO on my very first visit to the United States, when I became a green card holder, so I am particularly worried about what is happening with immigration in the US. In the 1960s, NATO was the bedrock of our defence in Europe; it still is today. We need a stronger NATO and must convert President Trump into a great, positive supporter of the defence of Europe.

Answered by: Mike Penning | Ministry of Defence

I learned an awful lot about NATO when I was in uniform with the British Army of the Rhine back in the '70s and '80s. Our American allies were with us then, and they are with us today. We need to ensure that America is 100% behind NATO—that commitment has gone through—and the Labour party leadership should be, too.

Asked by: Richard Graham

In relation to both these deployments, I welcome President Trump's wholehearted support for NATO, as well as the transfer of command of the NATO response land corps and the very high readiness joint task force to the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps in Gloucester and the 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade respectively. Does my right hon. Friend agree that that is great testament to the UK's role in NATO, and will he send this House's best wishes to the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and the 20th Armoured Infantry Brigade?

Answered by: Mike Penning | Ministry of Defence

I could not agree more with my colleague. One thing that I know as a former serviceman is that our armed forces need to know that the country is behind them. I hope that the entire House will support our

Immigration: Poland

13 January 2017 | 58962

Asked by: Louise Ellman

To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department, what representations she has received on the concerns of the Polish community since the EU referendum; and if she will make a statement.

Answering member: Robert Goodwill | Home Office

Until exit negotiations are concluded, the UK remains a full member of the European Union and all the rights and obligations of EU membership remain in force.

Poland is and will remain an important partner for the UK. The Secretary of State for the Home Department has regular contact with her European counterparts, including Polish Interior Minister Mariusz Błaszczak. Most recently this included an inward ministerial visit to the UK on 5 September, and as part of the UK Poland Intergovernmental Consultations on 28 November. A range of issues of mutual interest were discussed including free movement rights, action to tackle hate crime, and continued security and police cooperation.

Poland: Diplomatic Relations

10 January 2017 | 908050

Asked by: David Morris | Party: Conservative Party

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the strength of diplomatic relations between Poland and the UK.

Answering member: Boris Johnson | Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Poland and the UK are close allies. As the Prime Minister, my Rt Hon. Friend the Member for Maidenhead (Mrs May) said during November's UK-Poland intergovernmental consultations: "The relationship between Poland and the United Kingdom is important both for the prosperity and the security of our countries. And as the UK leaves the EU, I am determined to strengthen this partnership".

5. Other Parliamentary material

5.1 Debates

Contribution of Poles to UK Society
19 Jul 2016 | 613 c299-323WH

Anglo-Russian Relations
04 May 2016 | 609 cc141-156WH

5.2 Statements

NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence
28 Mar 2017 | Written statements | HCWS563

Sir Michael Fallon | Ministry of Defence

At the Warsaw Summit in 2016, NATO Allies agreed to enhance the Alliance's deterrence and defence posture in response to the growing threats the Euro-Atlantic region faces, including Russian belligerence. The UK is leading the work necessary to deliver an Alliance that is capable and credible of responding to all threats. We took the decision to provide one of the four defensive, but combat-capable, battlegroups that NATO is now deploying to the Baltic States and Poland to defend NATO. This enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) demonstrates Allies' solidarity, determination, and ability to act by triggering an immediate Allied response to any aggression.

The main body of our fighting forces will arrive in Estonia and Poland in the coming weeks.

We are providing the Framework Battlegroup of around 800 military personnel in Estonia, with around 200 additional troops from France and Denmark: French forces will join us in 2017 and Danish forces in 2018. 5 RIFLES is providing the majority of the UK military personnel for the first rotation, and we are also deploying armoured Infantry equipped with Warrior armoured fighting vehicles, artillery, tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, and a small troop of Challenger 2 Main Battle Tanks.

Our Battlegroup will contribute to regional defence and security. We will actively support the Estonian Defence Force's 1st Infantry Brigade in its role deterring aggression, and we will conduct joint exercising and training with Danish, French, Estonian, and other forces in the region to build a strong multinational Battlegroup.

Based on our close bilateral relationship, we are also sending a British Light Cavalry Squadron of 150 Light Dragoons to Poland. This force will fall under the US eFP Battlegroup in Poland, and we will work closely with our Polish and US Allies to deter aggression against NATO territory.

We are prepared in case our forces are tested by Russia, including through cyber-attacks and false media reports. We are taking all necessary steps to protect our personnel. We will ensure that our forces maintain the highest standards of conduct, and if it is found that a false allegation has been made against an individual or group of British Service personnel, the UK Government will ensure that the matter is publically refuted and, where possible, provide clear attribution of the originator.

Our forces in Estonia are a proportionate response to the changed security environment in Eastern Europe, as demonstrated by Russia's aggressive actions in Ukraine. The eFP deployments send a strong message of NATO's strength and unity as well as its commitment to defend Poland and the Baltic States.

The UK has been transparent with Russia about our eFP plans; Vice Chief of Defence Staff General Sir Gordon Messenger discussed them with his counterpart, Colonel General Zhuravlev when they met in Moscow last month, and eFP has also been briefed to Russia at the NATO-Russia Council level.

6. UK-Poland Trade

In 2015, the UK exported £5.3 billion worth of goods and services to Poland and imported £10.1 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of £4.8 billion. The UK has run a trade deficit with Poland in each of the last 10 years, the largest being £4.8 billion in 2015. British exports to Poland peaked at £5.5 billion in 2014; UK imports from Poland peaked at £10.1 billion in 2015.

UK exports to Poland represented 2.3% of UK exports to the EU and 1.0% of all UK exports in 2015. In the same year, imports from Poland represented 3.5% of UK imports from the EU and 1.9% of all UK imports.

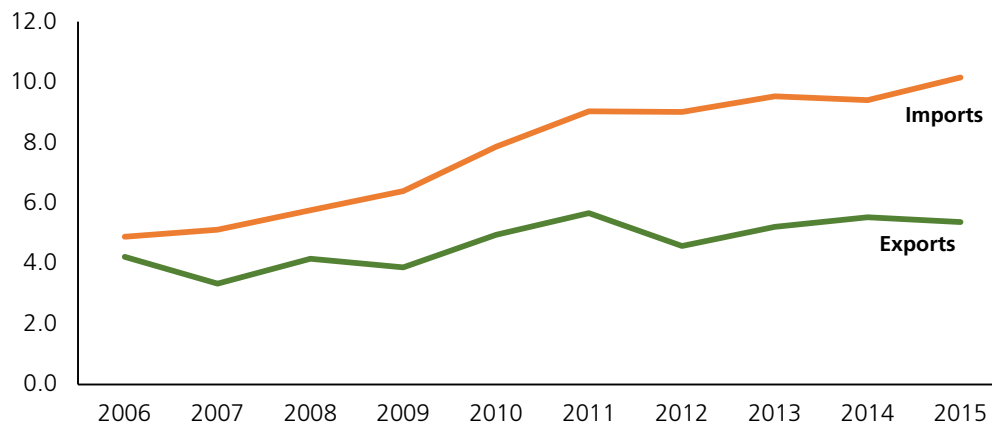
In 2015, Poland was the UK's 21st largest export market for goods and 26th largest export market for services. In the same year, Poland was the UK's 12th largest source of goods imports and 21st largest source of service imports.

UK Goods and Services trade with Poland, 2006-15 (£ millions)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Exports	4.2	3.3	4.2	3.9	4.9	5.7	4.6	5.2	5.5	5.4
Imports	4.9	5.1	5.8	6.4	7.9	9.0	9.0	9.5	9.4	10.2
Balance	-0.7	-1.8	-1.6	-2.5	-2.9	-3.4	-4.4	-4.3	-3.9	-4.8

Source: ONS

UK Trade with Poland, 2006 - 2015
£ billions



Trade in goods

In 2015, the UK's single largest export to Poland was road vehicles, valued at £523 million; this represented 12% of all UK goods exports to Poland. Other British exports to Poland included medicinal and pharmaceutical products, valued at £212 million (5% of goods exports) and industrial machinery, valued at £191 million (4% of goods exports).

In 2015, Poland's largest export to the UK was road vehicles, valued at £1.4 billion, representing 15% of all Polish goods exports to the UK. Other exports to the UK included electrical machinery and appliances, valued at £812 million (9% of goods exports), furniture, valued at £601 million (7% of goods exports) and telecoms equipment and appliances, valued at £547 million (6% of all goods exports).

7. Further reading

Library Briefings Papers

[NATO Brussels Summit 2017: a preview](#)

Commons Briefing papers CBP-7956

[NATO's military response to Russia: November 2016 update](#)

Commons Briefing papers CBP-7276

Websites

[The Polish-British Belvedere Forum](#)

[The Visegrad Group](#)

[The Polish Heritage Society](#)

[All-Party Parliamentary Group on Poland](#)

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