

Debate Pack

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NATO and international security

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Background

A general debate on NATO and international security is scheduled for Thursday 19 May 2022 in the House of Commons chamber.

Finland and Sweden to seek NATO membership

Finland and Sweden have [indicated they want to join NATO](#). This is a historic turn around for both countries, who have long espoused military non-alignment. NATO's Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, described the two Nordic countries as "[NATO's closest partners](#)" and said their membership "[would increase our shared security, demonstrate that NATO's door is open and that aggression does not pay](#)." However, the accession process may take some months and requires the support of all of the 30 current members of the Alliance. NATO member Turkey has expressed reservations, citing Sweden and Finland's [support for Kurdish militant groups](#).

UK security agreements with Sweden and Finland

On 11 May the Prime Minister travelled to both countries and signed separate bilateral agreements agreeing to support each other in the event of an attack or disaster. The relevant wording is the same in both agreements:

We confirmed that, should either country suffer a disaster or an attack, the United Kingdom and [...] will, upon request from the affected country, assist each other in a variety of ways, which may include military means.

Both countries already participate in the UK-led [Joint Expeditionary Force](#), which is a coalition of mainly Nordic and Baltic countries led by the UK and is outside of NATO. Jens Stoltenberg said NATO will also look at ways to [provide security assurances to the two countries](#) in the period of time between application and full membership, before they benefit from the full NATO collective defence articulated in [Article 5 of the Washington Treaty](#) (that an armed attack on one is considered an attack against them all). Stoltenberg suggested this could involve increasing NATO's presence in the region, in and around Finland and Sweden.

NATO Summit in June and a new Strategic Concept

The next NATO Heads of State and Government summit will be held in Madrid, Spain, on 28 to 30 June. The Alliance is expected to formally adopt a new [Strategic Concept](#). The Concept will assess the current security environment and set out how the Alliance intends to position itself over the next few years. The last concept was adopted in 2010, at the Lisbon Summit, when NATO was still leading international efforts in Afghanistan. This new concept will likely affirm NATO's renewed focus on defending and securing the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Concept may also indicate how the Alliance views China and the Indo-Pacific. The UK set out plans to 'tilt' to the Indo-Pacific in its 2021 Integrated Review. Liz Truss, the Foreign Secretary, used her 2022 Mansion House speech to "[reject the false choice between Euro-Atlantic security and Indo-Pacific security](#)" and argued NATO must have a "global outlook, ready to tackle global threats".

The Summit will also likely address the defence spending plans of members. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, several members have pledged to increase defence spending and, if they don't already, to devote 2% of GDP on defence. This is the target set by NATO. Information on defence spending by NATO allies can be found in Commons Library paper [UK defence expenditure](#).

Ukraine, Russia, and reinforcing its eastern flank

NATO [chiefs of defence](#) will meet on Thursday 19 May and are likely to discuss further steps to reinforce the Alliance's military posture. Ever since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, NATO has increased its presence in [member states along its eastern flank](#). The UK is leading the battlegroup in Estonia. NATO ruled out establishing a [no-fly zone over Ukraine](#) early on in the conflict.

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Press and media articles

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

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

[Neutral Switzerland leans closer to NATO in response to Russia](#)

Euractiv

16 May 2022

[NATO Madrid Summit in June to assess future NATO-Russia ties: Blinken](#)

ANI News

15 May 2022

[Ukraine war: Putin warns Finland joining Nato would be 'mistake'](#)

BBC News Online

14 May 2022

[UK agrees mutual security deals with Finland and Sweden](#)

BBC News Online

12 May 2022

[Finland and Sweden joining NATO will help deter Russia, says security analyst](#)

CNBC

Ravi Buddhavarapu

12 May 2022

[UK could give military help to Sweden and Finland under new deal, Boris Johnson says](#)

Independent

Andrew Woodcock

11 May 2022

[UK goes further than any other Nato country in Sweden and Finland pledge](#)

The Guardian

Patrick Wintour

11 May 2022

[Sweden and Finland backed by Western power during NATO move](#)

Politico

Alexander Ward and Quint Forgey

11 May 2022

[Finnish PM says NATO decision will focus on safety of citizens](#)

Reuters

11 May 2022

[How can the US and NATO help bring about Russia's 'strategic failure' in Ukraine?](#)

Atlantic Council

Connor McPartland

11 May 2022

[Timeline of NATO expansion since 1949](#)

ABC News

10 May 2022

[Nato's eastern front: will the military build-up make Europe safer?](#)

Financial Times

Henry Foy

4 May 2022

[Truss says West must overhaul approach to international security](#)

Evening Standard

Gavin Cordon

27 April 2022

[Japan to attend NATO summit in June, says U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken](#)

Japan Times

27 April 2022

[70% of voters are against Ireland joining Nato](#)

The Times

Brian Mahon

26 April 2022

[Russia's nuclear warning as Nato considers expansion](#)

The Times

Tom Ball

15 April 2022

[The EU, US and NATO: Partners for global security](#)

Wilson Centre

28 March 2022

Cooperative security as NATO's core task

NATO

10 February 2022

Your move, Mr Biden: why Russia's challenge to Nato cannot go unanswered

The Times

Michael Evans

5 January 2022

China's rise as a global security actor: implications for NATO

IISS

Meia Nouwens and Helena Legarda

21 December 2020

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Press releases

[Defence Secretary meets US counterpart to discuss support for Ukraine](#)

Ministry of Defence

13 May 2022

Ben Wallace met his US counterpart, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, at the Pentagon in Washington DC on Wednesday. They spoke about joint UK-US efforts to support Ukraine, including through supply of military aid and the coordination and delivery of donations from other partners.

They also discussed the ongoing drive to ensure NATO can deter and defend against any Russian aggression towards allies in Eastern Europe and looked ahead to the upcoming NATO Summit in Madrid in June.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

It was extremely good to meet again with my good friend and NATO partner, Lloyd Austin.

The US and UK relationship is as strong as ever. We will continue to work with unity and resolve to provide Ukraine with what it needs to defend itself against Russia's unprovoked invasion.

We discussed the next steps to provide defensive support for Ukraine, as well as AUKUS, the future of NATO, and other aspects of our shared security.

The UK and US have been at the forefront of international efforts to support the Ukrainian government and armed forces as they defend themselves from the unprovoked attack by Putin's forces. The US has supplied around £3 billion of military aid to Ukraine since the war began, while the UK has just confirmed £1.3 billion in extra funding for military operations and aid to the country – on top of the existing £1.5 billion of UK support including humanitarian aid and grants, as well as military kit such as armoured vehicles, anti-tank missiles and air defence systems.

Both countries have also taken leading roles in organising international donations of military equipment. The Defence Secretary has hosted two international donor conferences to coordinate military aid from 35 partner nations, while RAF aircraft have moved thousands of tonnes of military assistance from donors around the world to Ukraine.

In the three-day visit to the US, the Defence Secretary carried out a series of engagements with senior politicians and defence and intelligence officials, all aimed at reinforcing this close trans-Atlantic co-operation in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as discussing wider defence issues.

PM meeting with Prime Minister Jonas Støre of Norway

10 Downing St

13 May 2022

The Prime Minister welcomed Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Støre to Downing Street today.

They discussed the security situation in northern Europe and the Prime Minister updated on his visits to Finland and Sweden this week. Both leaders underscored their full support for any sovereign choice made by Nordic partners to enhance their security. The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Støre agreed that neither NATO nor the Nordic region posed a threat and that the longstanding policy of 'High North, low tension' had created decades of stability and prosperity for the area.

In that context, they stressed that Putin's barbaric invasion of Ukraine and hostility towards neighbouring states was totally unjustified and already proving to be a profound miscalculation. The Prime Minister welcomed Norway's defensive support to Ukraine in recent weeks and the leaders agreed to work together to provide much-needed training and equipment to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

They also agreed on the need for NATO allies to back Ukraine politically, taking a unified approach that avoids giving Putin licence to further twist the knife in the wound of Ukraine.

The leaders discussed the pressing need to increase the supply of sustainable energy. The Prime Minister stressed the importance of the UK-Norway relationship on this, and remarked that the sky was the limit as far as collaboration between our countries on this issue goes.

Following their meeting, the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Støre signed a new Joint Declaration on the UK-Norway relationship. A declaration which, Prime Minister Støre observed, will mean that Norway cooperates more extensively with the UK than any other country in the world.

PM meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Andersson

10 Downing St

11 May 2022

The Prime Minister was welcomed to Harpsund by Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson today, to discuss long term security collaboration between the UK and Sweden.

The leaders agreed that the aftershocks of Putin's abhorrent invasion of Ukraine had fundamentally changed international security architecture. They underlined that relations with Putin could never be normalised.

The invasion had also sharpened the focus on European security, the Prime Minister said, adding that the United Kingdom deeply valued its already close defence and security relationship with Sweden.

The leaders discussed how British and Swedish forces could increase their military cooperation in the coming months, and the Prime Minister said he believed today's security declaration would not only bring them closer together but allow both forces to adapt to the challenges of tomorrow, side-by-side.

Sweden has advanced, cutting-edge military technology and world leading Armed Forces, and the closer collaboration between both countries will benefit wider Euro-Atlantic security, the Prime Minister added.

Speaking about energy security, the leaders discussed closer collaboration on renewables, including wind farm technology.

Both agreed to stay in close touch in the coming weeks and months.

PM meeting with President Niinistö of Finland

10 Downing St

13 May 2022

The Prime Minister met the President of Finland, Sauli Niinistö in Helsinki this evening ahead of signing a security agreement with the nation on behalf of the UK.

Both leaders discussed the barbaric invasion of Ukraine, which they agreed had changed the equation of European security.

The Prime Minister set out the United Kingdom's staunch support of Finland's sovereign right to make decisions about its future without fear or influence. He made clear that Finland could depend on the United Kingdom's unequivocal and steadfast support.

As two democratic, northern European nations, the UK and Finland shared common challenges, and would stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the face of traditional and hybrid threats, the Prime Minister added.

The leaders also discussed the importance of energy security and how both nations could boost trade ties.

The Prime Minister and President Niinistö said they looked forward to even closer military collaboration and agreed to stay in close touch.

Prime Minister signs new assurances to bolster European security

10 Downing St

11 May 2022

The Prime Minister is signing historic declarations with Sweden and Finland today to reinforce their security and fortify northern Europe's defences, in the face of renewed threats.

As fellow liberal democracies, and members of the Joint Expeditionary Force, both nations are already vital security partners in Northern Europe, with world-leading defence capabilities and cutting-edge technology development.

Visiting Harpsund, the Swedish Prime Minister's country residence, and Helsinki, the Prime Minister will set out the UK's intention to support the two nations' armed forces should either face crisis or come under attack.

This morning the Prime Minister signed mutual security assurances with Prime Minister Andersson in Sweden, and this afternoon he will travel to Finland to sign a similar security declaration with President Niinistö.

The declarations will see a step-change in defence and security cooperation between the UK and each country, intensifying intelligence sharing, accelerating joint military training, exercising and deployments, and bolstering security across all three countries and northern Europe.

They will also see the UK bolster its collaboration on traditional threats facing all three nations, while working also with Sweden and Finland to tackle new geopolitical challenges, such as hybrid and cyber threats.

The Prime Minister will also make clear the UK's unwavering support for NATO's open door policy during the visit.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We are steadfast and unequivocal in our support to both Sweden and Finland and the signing of these security declarations is a symbol of the everlasting assurance between our nations.

These are not a short term stop gap, but a long term commitment to bolster military ties and global stability, and fortify Europe's defences for generations to come.

The declarations signed today will allow the UK to cooperate with key Nordic partners and their armed forces, in all domains, including cyberspace. They will also allow for closer collaboration on new technology and intelligence gathering.

As part of increased defence cooperation with Sweden and Finland, the Prime Minister will offer to increase deployments to the region, including with Royal Air Force, British Army and Royal Navy assets and personnel.

Both Sweden and Finland have played a key role in supporting Ukraine to defend itself in recent weeks and months, while British, Swedish and Finnish forces have exercised together across the High North and the Baltics.

Both nations are part of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force taskforce, which brings together 10 countries in support of stability and security in the North Atlantic, Baltic Sea Region and the High North. The assurances made today build on the already close ties of that defence grouping.

Today's visit comes after the Prime Minister welcomed the Swedish and Finnish leaders to Downing Street in March to discuss closer security and defence ties.

PM to tell NATO leaders: Collective Security must be the foundation of pandemic recovery

10 Downing St

14 June 2021

The Prime Minister will travel to Brussels today (14 June 2021) for a NATO Summit. The meeting is the first between leaders of the Alliance since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic and the election of President Biden.

Earlier this year the UK published a wholesale review of our foreign, defence and security policy. The Integrated Review demonstrated our unwavering commitment to Euro-Atlantic security and the NATO alliance, underpinned by a £24.1 billion investment in the UK's defence capability.

Today the Prime Minister will tell fellow leaders that the global recovery from coronavirus must be underpinned by our shared security. The pandemic has been exacerbated by attacks on that security, both directly through hostile actors carrying out cyber-attacks on allies' health systems, and indirectly through the devastating impact instability and conflict can have on countries' ability to cope with health crises.

The coronavirus pandemic has therefore reinforced the value of NATO and allies must redouble their commitment for the alliance and ensure it adapts to meet the challenges of the future.

The Prime Minister will use his intervention at the Summit to support the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's work on modernising the Alliance. He will say that NATO has an obligation to invest in research and development so we can face down the challenges of the future, including cyber threats and the impact of climate change on the global system.

He will underline his strong support for all the elements of the NATO 2030 modernisation initiative, including stronger deterrence and security, a reinforcement of Allies' shared values, a renewed focus on resilience and innovation, and new policies on climate security, cyber defence and preventing sexual violence in conflict.

The UK is Europe's leading contributor to NATO and is equipping the alliance with next-generation capabilities. This includes the commitment of cyber capability to NATO and the deployment of the Carrier Strike Group, which is currently participating in exercises in the Mediterranean alongside Allies as part of a NATO taskforce before sailing to the Indo-Pacific.

The Prime Minister said:

NATO is not just important to the UK's security, it is our security.

NATO owes it to the billion people we keep safe every day to continually adapt and evolve to meet new challenges and face down emerging threats. This will ensure NATO is still the bedrock of global defence for generations to come.

As we recover from the global devastation wreaked by the coronavirus pandemic we need to do so with secure foundations. The peace and stability brought by NATO has underpinned global prosperity for over 70 years, and I have every confidence it will continue to do so now.

During their Summit today, Allies are expected to discuss the drawdown of troops from Afghanistan and the new chapter in NATO's relationship with the country. The Prime Minister will pay tribute to the 150,000 British troops who served in Afghanistan and emphasise the UK's commitment to support the Government of Afghanistan, including in its efforts to counter terrorism, through all of our diplomatic, development and defence work.

The Prime Minister will also outline the need for NATO to look beyond the Euro Atlantic to address challenges further afield, including in the Indo-Pacific.

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UK security agreements with Finland and Sweden

United Kingdom - Finland statement

10 Downing St

11 May 2022

HELSINKI, 11 MAY 2022

The Republic of Finland and the United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland reiterate our shared desire for ever deeper defence and security cooperation that is fit for any circumstances.

We are committed to defending the principles of the European security order. In light of the deterioration of the security situation in Europe, we wish to further intensify our security and defence cooperation and strengthen our mutual solidarity. We will build on our current, established cooperation and work together to further develop our capabilities.

We condemn the ongoing Russian invasion in Ukraine and call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease hostilities, withdraw its troops from Ukraine and seriously engage in peace negotiations. We have been increasing support for Ukraine, including deliveries of lethal material, and are committed to helping the Ukrainians in rebuilding their country when Russia's military offensive ends.

Finland welcomes the United Kingdom's strong commitment to the security of the Baltic Sea region, including British troops in Estonia as a part of NATO's presence and the United Kingdom led Joint Expeditionary Force, of which Finland is a committed member.

The United Kingdom is unwavering in its commitment to NATO's 'open door' policy. The United Kingdom welcomes Finland's role in providing security in the Baltic Sea region, in Northern Europe and beyond. The United Kingdom firmly believes that, should Finland decide to apply for NATO membership, it would contribute to the security of the whole North Atlantic area. Finland and the United Kingdom share common security interests and the United Kingdom stands ready to assist Finland in its endeavours by all means necessary.

We confirmed that, should either country suffer a disaster or an attack, the United Kingdom and Finland will, upon request from the affected country, assist each other in a variety of ways, which may include military means. This cooperation will remain fully in line with each country's security and defence policy and is designed to complement not replace existing European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

The United Kingdom and Finland will intensify and deepen their cooperation, including in countering hybrid threats and influence activities. Information sharing, including intelligence cooperation, has an important role to play in countering hybrid threats and protecting critical infrastructure. Both countries will work together on shared situation awareness, enhancing data protection and countering cyber threats.

We will maintain regular bilateral consultations on foreign and security policy issues, which serve an important role in deepening the partnership between the United Kingdom and Finland.

The long-standing and strong British-Finnish defence relationship contributes to stability and security in Northern Europe. Bilateral defence cooperation between the United Kingdom and Finland builds on the Framework Arrangement, signed in 2016. We will update this in order to further deepen and strengthen our cooperation and take into account changes in the security environment.

This document is a political declaration and not a legally binding commitment under international law.

UK-Sweden Political Declaration of Solidarity

10 Downing St

11 May 2022

HARPSUND, 11 MAY 2022

We, the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Kingdom of Sweden, confirm our shared desire for closer, stronger defence and security cooperation, to reinforce our key strategic partnership.

A SHARED VIEW ON CHALLENGES AND THREATS

The United Kingdom and Sweden share the same values and understanding of security challenges, both in Europe and globally. Both countries are committed to working together to address these challenges and strengthen defence and security cooperation and solidarity in Europe.

In order to maintain the status and integrity of the European security order, the United Kingdom and Sweden are resolved to defend its principles, reject attempts to undermine or reshape it, and demand accountability for violations against it. Military aggression to change the borders of Europe must never be accepted. Likewise, attempts to challenge the norms, and undermine cooperative fora and institutions that constitute the foundation of European security must be firmly resisted.

The United Kingdom and Sweden recognise that regional and global challenges are best addressed by acting together. In an era of heightened geopolitical competition on a global scale, not only in terms of military power but also of political influence, strategic technologies and economic relations, we intend to defend common interests and a rules-based international order.

Both countries recognise that the global security environment is affected by hybrid threats, cyber-attacks, organised crime and cross-border terrorism, as well as the effects of climate change on peace and security. The United Kingdom and Sweden will act together to meet such challenges and threats.

The United Kingdom and Sweden share the same security environment in Northern Europe. We face common challenges relating to the deteriorating security situation, due to Russia's aggressive actions. We have a joint interest in a close political dialogue and practical cooperation between NATO and Sweden.

The United Kingdom and Sweden recognise that unity of purpose and action remain our greatest asset in relation to Russia. The coordinated responses of the international community have shown Russia that malign action comes at a cost. Both countries will uphold and coordinate our principled positions related to Russia's negative behaviour. Together, we must address the challenges arising from Russia's actions, wherever they occur.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND SWEDEN

The United Kingdom and Sweden have a strong tradition of cooperating to address common challenges in Northern Europe and globally. This includes hybrid threats and cyber security as well as working together in international crisis management operations. The strong relationship between our respective Armed Forces and Defence Ministries is founded on the Statement of Intent from 2014 and the Programme of Defence Cooperation from 2016. Our bilateral defence cooperation also builds on three Memoranda of Understanding covering Defence Materiel Cooperation, the Conduct of Exercises, Training and Integrated Test and Evaluation Activities and the Provision of Host Nation Support, and Future Combat Air Systems' Cooperation. Our deep defence cooperation covers an extensive range of activities, from international operations to defence research. We also cooperate extensively in multilateral formats including the UN, the Council of Europe and the OSCE, through Sweden's Enhanced Opportunities' Partnership with NATO, and the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) and the Northern Group.

Both countries recognise the need to continuously develop their defence and security cooperation. In these efforts, we should build on current cooperation and work together to further develop our capabilities. New initiatives to

improve our interoperability and further strengthen our partnership will be explored.

On the basis of solidarity, values and geographical proximity, the United Kingdom and Sweden will meet challenges in peace, crisis and conflict together. Should either country suffer a disaster or attack, the United Kingdom and Sweden will, upon request from the affected country assist each other in a variety of ways, which may include military means. Such an intensified cooperation will remain fully in line in with each country's security and defence policy and is designed to complement not replace existing European and Euro-Atlantic cooperation.

FUTURE BILATERAL SECURITY POLICY DIALOGUE

Regular bilateral consultations on security policy issues serve an important role in deepening the dialogue between the United Kingdom and Sweden. The United Kingdom and Sweden will meet regularly in a 2+2 format at the level of Political Director (MFA) and Defence Policy Director (MOD) to discuss security policy issues.

This document is a political declaration and not a legally binding commitment under international law.

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PQs

Ukraine: Armed Conflict

27 Apr 2022 | 156387

Asked by: Sir Mark Hendrick

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps she is taking to (a) increase security, (b) help prevent Russian interference and (c) support refugees in (i) Moldova and (ii) other neighbouring countries that share a border with an active war zone.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK has worked closely with partners in the region to increase regional security, support refugees and prevent Russian interference.

We are supporting defence sector reform in Moldova, including through the NATO Defence Capacity Building Initiative. The UK is doubling the number of defence personnel in Estonia and sending additional military equipment. The Prime Minister also agreed with his Polish counterpart a programme to ensure our current cooperation on European security is broadened and strengthened for the years and decades to come.

On 26 March, the UK announced £25 million in funding to the UN Refugee Agency and £10 million to the International Federation of the Red Cross to support countries neighbouring Ukraine to receive and care for refugees. Our humanitarian field teams in the region provide logistical support and advice and coordinate with governments and the UN in neighbouring countries. UK support will reach over 140,000 refugees in the region, providing protection, shelter and cash for the most vulnerable groups and for people with specific needs.

Finland and Sweden: NATO

27 Apr 2022 | 156384

Asked by: Sir Mark Hendrick

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what recent discussions she has had with her counterparts in Finland and Sweden regarding each of those countries' prospective applications for NATO membership.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK Government engages regularly with Finland and Sweden, including on security issues. The UK fully supports Sweden and Finland's relationships with NATO as Enhanced Opportunities Partners (EOP) and we also cooperate through the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force. As two of only six EOP countries, Sweden and Finland make significant contributions to NATO operations and have enhanced opportunities for dialogue and cooperation with Allies. Any application for NATO membership must be a decision taken by Sweden or Finland alone. The UK will continue to support and respect Finnish and Swedish decisions related to their own security policy.

Democracy: Eastern Europe

26 Apr 2022 | 712 c569

Asked by: Hilary Benn

Many countries of eastern Europe chose to join NATO as soon as they were free to do so, because they regard membership of the defensive alliance as essential to their security and democracy. As a result of Russia's invasion, Finland and Sweden are considering whether to make such an application; the Foreign Secretary has made it clear that the UK would support an application if it was forthcoming. Is the Minister confident that, in that event, NATO would agree to admit Finland and Sweden to the alliance?

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The phrase that comes to mind is, "When people are free to choose, they choose freedom." In this instance, a number of countries are seriously considering joining NATO—as the hon. Gentleman says, predominantly Finland and Sweden. I have no doubt that their application will be considered seriously by NATO member states. They are both serious defence players in their own right. Our view is that they would be an asset to NATO. Ultimately, the choice is for the people of those countries, but as my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has said, we would look favourably on that application.

Democracy: Eastern Europe

26 Apr 2022 | 712 c401

Asked by: Sarah Atherton

Without doubt, the UK is leading the way in providing military support to eastern Europe. We are doing everything from sending manned Challenger 2 tanks to Poland to doubling the size of our deployment in Estonia. Can my right hon. Friend confirm that the UK is working closely with NATO allies to provide all the support required to defend democracy in eastern Europe?

Answered by: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

I assure my hon. Friend that the UK will continue to play a leading role in NATO to respond to Putin's brutal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. I fly out to NATO tomorrow to meet our new permanent representative and our allies in that alliance. NATO has also announced the establishment of four additional multilateral battlegroups in Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. As I say, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and NATO Foreign Ministers have agreed increased support to regional partners to strengthen their resilience and their ability to defend themselves against cyber-attacks, disinformation, political interference and other physical and political threats to them.

[NATO](#)

25 Apr 2022 | 154319

Asked by: Alex Norris

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what assessment he has made of the potential merits of establishing a centre for democratic resilience within NATO HQ; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

NATO is a values based Alliance and should play an important role in promoting the rules based international order and defending its values. This is already reflected in the NATO 2030 agenda and will be in the next NATO Strategic Concept. It will be important to understand how such a centre would add value to existing initiatives in NATO and other fora which perform similar functions, such as the centres of excellence on hybrid and strategic communications.

[NATO: Armed Forces](#)

01 Apr 2022 | 148436

Asked by: Matt Vickers

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, whether his Department has made an assessment of the potential merits of increasing the number of British troops deployed as part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence.

Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

In order to strengthen NATO's deterrence and defence posture, increase interoperability with our Allies, and reinforce our bilateral relationships, the UK has played a leading role in NATO enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) since its inception, acting as framework nation in Estonia, and contributing to the US-led deployment in Poland. As part of the UK's multi-domain and coordinated response to Russia's unjustifiable invasion of Ukraine, the Prime

Minister announced last month that, alongside other deployments in support of Allies, the UK would temporarily double its presence in Estonia to brigade strength. The Ministry of Defence keeps the UK's defence posture under constant review.

Topical Questions

28 Mar 2022 | 711 cc559-682

Asked by: Dr James Davies

Over the weekend I was pleased to see two Royal Navy vessels join five other joint expeditionary force nations in escorting British and Danish supply ships. They successfully delivered military vehicles and equipment to the UK-led NATO battle group in Estonia. Does my hon. Friend agree that as well as playing a vital role in NATO, it is important for the UK to continue to lead the joint expeditionary force?

Answered by: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

I certainly do. NATO has been the absolute cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security since the end of the second world war, and long may it continue to be so. Neither the JEF, the EU nor anything else should be seen as an alternative. However, there is a market for complementary organisations such as the JEF, which do not require consensus. The JEF is absolutely showing its value in the way that it is being used at the moment.

NATO Members: Co-operation

28 Mar 2022 | 711 c550

Asked by: Theresa Villiers

Will the Government co-operate with NATO allies to continue the flow of lethal aid to the Ukrainian armed forces, including weapons such as Starstreak to defend against aircraft attacks?

Answered by: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

I did not take the opportunity in my answer to a previous question to make an important distinction, but my right hon. Friend gives me that opportunity now. NATO is not the provider of lethal aid into the conflict in Ukraine. NATO is looking at how it doubles down on its eastern flank in order to contain the violence within Ukraine and show the resolve of NATO countries to stand up for article 5. Those who are donating lethal aid and non-lethal aid to Ukraine are doing so bilaterally, and it is through UK leadership that a lot of it is being co-ordinated and delivered. The next donor conference convened by the Secretary of State will happen later this week. We are ambitious for even more countries to join the donor group at that stage.

Russian Aggression: Support for NATO Allies

28 Mar 2022 | 711 c550

Asked by: Stewart Malcolm McDonald

NATO is clearly focused on bolstering its own defences and on supporting Ukraine militarily. Several NATO and non-NATO member states are focused on doing the same, plus supporting Ukraine economically. But Ukraine will require Marshall plan levels of rebuilding and international co-operation and support across NATO countries, EU countries and countries further afield. Will the Minister enlighten the House as to what discussions are taking place in NATO specifically with a focus on helping the country to rebuild? The war will come to an end eventually and our friendship must continue the day after.

Answered by: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

The discussions in NATO very much focus on the Euro-Atlantic security implications of the conflict and on what the situation may be after it is completed. The wider geopolitical discussion and the economic plan, among other things that the hon. Gentleman rightly asks for, may be discussed within NATO, but I do not think that they are the focus of NATO discussions; I think that they are much more the focus of discussions within the G7, the EU and other ad hoc groupings that are coming together in order to worry about exactly what is next.

Russian Aggression: Support for NATO Allies

28 Mar 2022 | 711 c547

Asked by: Tony Lloyd

Is not one lesson of the brutal aggression of Russia in Ukraine that the decision by the Baltic states to join NATO was the right one? Aggression in Ukraine is not a vindication of NATO's expansion; it is a vindication of the Baltic states' joining our military alliance. Is there not a lesson for all NATO powers, including our own: we have to think again about how much we are prepared to spend on defence?

Answered by: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

Make no mistake: the NATO membership of our great friends and allies in the Baltic represents one of the great strengthening moments of the alliance generally. Nobody is prouder to fly the NATO flag than Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, and we stand four-square behind them and behind what it would mean if President Putin were to try to compromise the territorial integrity of those countries in any way. As for the hon. Gentleman's wider question about resourcing defence across the alliance adequately, I strongly agree; we are one of only a few countries that has been routinely spending the 2% of GDP target. It is fantastic that this moment of challenge within the euro-Atlantic has meant that other countries have now increased their spending to meet that target, too. If there are arguments for more money for defence, no

Defence Minister is ever going to object, but we should reflect that the UK has been spending 2% for a while and was given a very significant uplift from the Treasury only 12 months ago.

Balkans: Security

25 Mar 2022 | HL6870

Asked by: Baroness Helic

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to guarantee (1) security, and (2) stability, in the Western Balkans in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Russia's unprovoked, premeditated attack against the sovereign democratic state of Ukraine has heightened the risk of miscalculation or exploitation in the Western Balkans region. We will not allow Russia to use the region as a theatre for provocation or distraction. We are working closely with our NATO Allies, including the US and other European partners, to support security and stability across the region. We are using our programme funds to increase resilience against malign activity such as state-sponsored cyber-attacks, and we are deepening economic ties. In Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), we support the recent increase in personnel deployed as part of the Operation ALTHEA peace stabilisation force, and we are reviewing a range of restrictive measures, including sanctions and greater conditionality of international assistance to ensure stability in BiH. While Russia continues to violate international law, human rights and multiple commitments to peace and security, we will work with our allies and partners across the multilateral system to condemn Russia's appalling actions and to isolate it on the international stage.

Russia: NATO

10 Mar 2022 | 133294

Asked by: Ruth Jones

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what recent steps he has taken to ensure that the UK's NATO defence and security obligations are fulfilled to counter the threats from Russia.

Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

NATO is the cornerstone of UK and Euro-Atlantic security, and our support for the Alliance is ironclad. NATO is a defensive Alliance, and remains open to dialogue with Russia. But Russia's current actions pose the most serious threat to Euro-Atlantic security, and so we must also adjust our posture to strengthen deterrence and defence across the Euro-Atlantic area. The UK is

the largest European defence spender within NATO, a position strengthened by our recent increase of over £24 billion over the next four years. The UK spends 2.29% of its GDP on Defence, and 24.3% of this goes towards major equipment and associated research and development. This exceeds the respective 2% and 20% targets laid out within NATO's Defence Investment Pledge. In addition to meeting the 2% guideline every year since its introduction in 2006, our relative spending as a proportion of GDP is also the 4th highest amongst all 30 Allies.

At this time of unprovoked and unjustified Russian aggression in Ukraine, we are bolstering support for our Eastern European Allies in line with our commitments to collective security through NATO. We are doubling the number of our defence personnel in Estonia, and have sent further Typhoon jets to Cyprus to supplement NATO patrols over Eastern Europe. HMS Trent is currently conducting patrols in the Eastern Mediterranean alongside NATO Allies, and will soon be joined by a Type 45 Destroyer. This is all in addition to the 350 Royal Marines we have sent to Poland, and the 1,000 military personnel we have placed on standby to assist in any humanitarian response to events in Ukraine. We have also deployed humanitarian experts to NATO Allies Hungary, Slovakia and Romania.

NATO

25 Feb 2022 | 127274

Asked by: John Healey

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what the Government's priorities are for NATO's 2022 strategic concept.

Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

At the June 2021 NATO Summit, leaders agreed to develop an updated Strategic Concept for the Alliance, to be endorsed at the 2022 Summit in Madrid. They agreed that the next Strategic Concept should refresh the Alliance's approach to its three core tasks of collective defence, crisis management and co-operative security. It should also consider the current strategic environment and guide the ongoing adaptation of the Alliance.

The last Strategic Concept was agreed in 2010, and is the product of a different global context. The next Strategic Concept needs to reflect the new reality of systemic competition, and its implications for the Euro-Atlantic area, as set out in the 2021 Integrated Review. (The Concept needs to ensure that the Alliance:

- (i) stays strong and united, focused on keeping our people free and secure, and acting as a pillar for freedom, openness, and the rules-based international order;
- (ii) continues its modernisation, with a focus on speedy adoption of advanced technologies;

(iii) strengthens its political and military tools, and better integrates its activity and capabilities;
(iv) continues to develop its resilience, including against hybrid threats;
(v) reinforces Allies' enduring commitment to invest 2% of GDP in defence. The UK has locked in a 0.5% above inflation increase to our defence budget and an additional investment of £16.5 million over the next four years).

Ukraine: NATO Membership

24 Feb 2022 | 819 cc329-332

Asked by: Lord Balfe

To ask Her Majesty's Government what steps they are taking, if any, (1) to encourage Ukraine to apply for membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and (2) to build support among other members of NATO for any such application.

Answered by: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

My Lords, the United Kingdom strongly condemns the appalling, unprovoked attack that President Putin has launched on the people of Ukraine. President Putin has chosen a path of bloodshed and destruction by launching this unprovoked attack on Ukraine. The United Kingdom remains firmly committed to Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. We fully support the partnership relationship between NATO and Ukraine, and we remain committed to the 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration in which all NATO allies agreed that Ukraine will become a member of the alliance. In 2020, NATO welcomed Ukraine as an enhanced opportunity partner as a means of enhancing its interoperability and co-operation with the alliance in order to support Ukraine's continuing programme of internal reform.

Topical Questions

25 Jan 2022 | 707 c845

Asked by: Giles Watling

With the NATO leadership set to change this September, does my right hon. Friend think it apposite that the leadership should go to a representative from a country that actually meets its defence spending commitments, which are vital to repel aggression from states such as Russia?

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK is proud to be a long-standing—indeed, founding—member of NATO and to consistently meet its 2% target. NATO remains one of the most important institutions for Euro-Atlantic security and it is incredibly important

that its future leadership recognises not only traditional threats, as we now see on Ukraine's borders, but emerging threats such as cyber, space and other realms of conflict.

Arctic and Shipping

10 Jan 2022 | 98313

Asked by: Stephen Doughty

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, when she last discussed (a) the security of the Arctic polar regions and (b) freedom of maritime navigation with NATO counterparts.

Answering member: James Cleverly | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Freedom of Navigation is a critical element of the rules-based international order and the UK plays an important role in upholding this principle. A clear example has been the global deployment of the HMS Queen Elizabeth Strike Group in 2021 - a joint deployment with NATO Allies which supported FCDO, Defence and International Trade objectives. We will continue to work with NATO Allies and other partners to safeguard Freedom of Navigation wherever it is under threat. In the margins of the NATO Foreign Ministerial in Riga in December 2021, The Foreign Secretary spoke with like-minded Allies including Canada about the importance of working together on issues affecting the Arctic, such as climate science and collective security. This was part of the Foreign Secretary's regular discussions with NATO counterparts covering regional security issues.

Eastern Europe: NATO

06 Jan 2022 | HL5004

Asked by: Lord Campbell-Savours

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assurances, to which they were a party, were given to (1) Mikhail Gorbachev, or (2) other representatives of the government of the Soviet Union, on NATO expansion into Eastern Europe at the time of German reunification; whether any such assurances remain valid; and what assessment they have made of whether those assurances are being met.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

During the 1990 discussions on German reunification, no written assurances about the further enlargement of NATO beyond Germany were made to Mr Gorbachev or other representatives of the Government of the Soviet Union. Despite consistent assertion, Russian leaders have been unable to produce any written evidence that such assurances were made.

Arctic: Climate Change

29 Nov 2021 | 80909

Asked by: John Healey

To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what discussions has he had with counterparts in (a) NATO and (b) the Arctic Council in the last 12 months on the security implications of climate change on the Arctic region.

Answering member: James Heappey | Ministry of Defence

The UK agrees with NATO's aim to be the leading international organisation in understanding, mitigating against and adapting to the impacts of climate change on security. In 2021 the UK and NATO Allies negotiated and agreed a NATO Agenda on Climate Change and Security and accompanying Action Plan, which contain concrete actions to tackle the implications of climate change on Alliance security. The Defence Secretary discussed this further with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg during COP26. The UK also greatly values its role as a state observer to the Arctic Council. As the Arctic Council does not discuss matters of military security, the Defence Secretary has not engaged with the Council on the security implications of climate change on the Arctic region. The Defence Secretary routinely discusses a range of security matters with his counterparts in most of the Arctic States, including how we can work with Allies and partners to ensure the Arctic remains a region characterised by high cooperation and low tensions.

Bosnia and Herzegovina: NATO

25 Nov 2021 | 76626

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what support her Department is providing to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina with joining NATO.

Answering member: Wendy Morton | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK supports Bosnia and Herzegovina's (BiH) aspirations to become a NATO member, when it meets the conditions. Working in close cooperation other members of the Alliance, the UK has helped the BiH MoD develop its medical capacities, support to civilian organisations, gender integration, officer training, international interoperability, and assisted in BiH's programme of reforms with NATO. We also support the NATO HQ in Sarajevo, including through the secondment of UK staff officers, who are playing an important role in building the capacity of the BiH Armed Forces.

[China: Taiwan](#)

23 Nov 2021 | HL3874

Asked by: Lord Dodds of Duncairn

To ask Her Majesty's Government what recent discussions they have had with NATO partners about China's policy towards Taiwan.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

Her Majesty's Government considers the Taiwan issue one to be settled peacefully by the people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait through constructive dialogue. The UK Government is in regular contact with like-minded partners on our shared priorities.

[NATO and Euro-Atlantic Security](#)

15 Nov 2021 | 703 cc302-4

Asked by: Rob Butler

What recent assessment his Department has made of the UK's contribution through NATO to the security of the Euro-Atlantic area.

Answered by: Ben Wallace | Ministry of Defence

NATO is the cornerstone of UK and Euro-Atlantic defence. As set out in the recent integrated review of international policy, the UK will remain the leading European ally within NATO, bolstering the alliance by tackling threats jointly and committing our resources to collective security in the Euro-Atlantic region. The UK contribution is substantial and comprehensive, spanning forces and headquarters, money, capabilities and people.

[NATO-Russia Council](#)

12 Nov 2021 | HL3574

Asked by: Lord Goodlad

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had with the government of Russia about the future of the NATO–Russia Council.

Answering member: Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The UK fully supports NATO's offer of a NATO-Russia Council first made in February 2020, regrets that Russia is currently choosing not to accept it and encourages Russia to do so. All Allies support a dual-track approach to Russia of strengthened deterrence and defence, alongside dialogue. This was most recently affirmed by Allied Leaders when they met in Brussels for the June 2021 NATO Summit. HMG continues to support NATO's openness to periodic, focused and meaningful dialogue with Russia, but there can be no

return to business as usual until Russia ceases its aggressive actions and returns to compliance with its obligations under international law. At any NATO-Russia Council, discussion of Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea should be the first item on the agenda.

NATO

13 Sep 2021 | 41763

Asked by: Daniel Kawczynski

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, what steps he is taking to (a) strengthen the importance of NATO since the recent withdrawal from Afghanistan and (b) encourage NATO members to contribute to future NATO missions.

Answering member: Nigel Adams | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

The Foreign Secretary, at a NATO ministerial summit in Brussels earlier this year, took the opportunity to reiterate the UK's unwavering support for NATO as the bedrock of transatlantic security, and to support proposals that will strengthen the Alliance's response to a whole range of existing and emerging threats. This sits alongside the importance of working with non-NATO partners to tackle rising global challenges, including by engaging with European states such as Sweden and Finland, or Indo-Pacific ones like Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

Afghanistan: NATO

27 Aug 2021 | HL2395

Asked by: Lord Truscott

To ask Her Majesty's Government what discussions they have had within NATO to maintain an Alliance presence in Afghanistan.

Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office

We have spoken a number of NATO Allies in recent days about the situation in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister has spoken to US President Biden, French President Macron, German Chancellor Merkel, Prime Minister Rutte and the NATO Secretary General. The Foreign Secretary has spoken to his US, French, Dutch, Danish and Turkish counterparts. We continue to work closely with our partners to assess how to address risks concerning terrorism most effectively and will continue to be at the forefront of the humanitarian response in Afghanistan.

6

Debates

[Support for Ukraine and Countering Threats from Russia](#)

02 Mar 2022 | House of Commons | 709 cc1097-1144

Fourteenth Opposition day debate (part two). Motion that this House condemns Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine; stands in solidarity with Ukrainians in their resistance to Russia's invasion of their sovereign state; supports the UK providing further defensive military, humanitarian and other assistance to Ukraine; recognises the importance of international unity against Russian state aggression; and calls on the Government to ensure that the United Kingdom's NATO defence and security obligations are fulfilled to counter the threats from Russia. Agreed to on question.

[Ukrainian NATO Membership](#)

08 Dec 2021 | House of Commons | 705 cc101-121WH

Motion that this House has considered British support for Ukraine's membership of NATO. Agreed to on question.

[Afghanistan: Inquiry](#)

04 Nov 2021 | House of Commons | 702 cc1080-1096

Motion that this House has considered the proposal for an inquiry into the UK's involvement in the NATO-led mission to Afghanistan. Agreed to on question.

[NATO](#)

02 Apr 2019 | House of Lords | 797 cc120-162

Lords motion to take note of the seventieth anniversary of the founding of NATO and its continuing role in the United Kingdom's defence and security. Agreed to on question.

7

Statements

Ukraine Update

25 Apr 2022 | 712 cc461-478

Secretary of State for Defence (Ben Wallace): It is 61 days since Russia invaded Ukraine, and 74 days since my Russian counterpart assured me that the Russian army would not be invading. As the invasion approaches its ninth week, I want to update the House on the current situation and the steps that we are taking to further our support for the Ukrainian people.

It is our assessment that approximately 15,000 Russian personnel have been killed during their offensive. Alongside the death toll are the equipment losses. A number of sources suggest that, to date, over 2,000 armoured vehicles have been destroyed or captured. That includes at least 530 tanks, 530 armoured personnel carriers, and 560 infantry fighting vehicles. Russia has also lost more than 60 helicopters and fighter jets. The offensive that was supposed to take a maximum of a week has now taken weeks. Last week Russia admitted that the Slava-class cruiser Moskva had sunk. That is the second key naval asset that the Russians have lost since invading, and its loss has significantly weakened their ability to bring their maritime assets to bear from the Black sea.

As I said in my last statement, Russia has so far failed in nearly every one of its objectives. In recognition of that failure, the Russian high command has regrouped, reinforced and changed its focus to securing the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. A failure of the Russia Ministry of Defence command and control at all levels has meant that it has now appointed one overall commander, General Dvornikov. At the start of this conflict, Russia had committed more than 120 battalion tactical groups, approximately 65% of its entire ground combat strength. According to our current assessment, about 25% of those have been rendered not combat-effective.

Ukraine is an inspiration to us all. Its brave people have never stopped fighting for their lands. They have endured indiscriminate bombardment, war crimes and overwhelming military aggression, but they have stood firm, galvanised the international community, and beaten back the army of Russia in the north and the north-east.

We anticipate that this next phase of the invasion will be an attempt by Russia to occupy further the Donbas and connect with Crimea via Mariupol. It is therefore urgent that we in the international community ensure that Ukraine gets the aid and weapons that it needs so much.

As Defence Secretary, I have ensured that at each step of the way the UK's support is tailored to the anticipated actions of Russia. To date we have

provided more than 5,000 anti-tank missiles, five air defence systems with more than 100 missiles, 1,360 anti-structure munitions, and 4.5 tonnes of plastic explosive. On 9 March, in response to indiscriminate bombing from the air and escalation by President Putin's forces, I announced that the UK would supply Starstreak high-velocity and low-velocity anti-air missiles. I am now able to report that these have been in theatre for more than three weeks, and have been deployed and used by Ukrainian forces to defend themselves and their territory.

Over the recess, my ministerial team hosted a Ukrainian Government delegation at Salisbury plain training area to explore further equipment options. That was quickly followed by the Prime Minister's announcement of a further £100 million-worth of high-grade military equipment, 120 armoured vehicles, sourcing anti-ship missile systems, and high-tech loitering munitions for precision strikes.

However, as we can see from Ukrainian requests, more still needs to be done. For that reason, I can now announce to the House that we shall be gifting a small number of armoured vehicles fitted with launchers for those anti-air missiles. Those Stormer vehicles will give Ukrainian forces enhanced short-range anti-air capabilities, day and night. Since my last statement, more countries have answered the call and more have stepped up to support. The Czech Republic has supplied T-72 tanks and BMP fighting vehicles, and Poland has also pledged T-72 tanks.

The quickest route to help Ukraine is with equipment and ammunition similar to what they already use. The UK Government obviously do not hold Russian equipment, but in order to help where we do not have such stock, we have enabled others to donate. Alongside Canada and Poland, the Royal Air Force has been busy moving equipment from donor countries to Ukraine. At the same time, if no donor can be found, we are purchasing equipment from the open market. On 31 March, I held my second international donor conference, with an increase in the number of countries involved to 35, including representatives from the European Union and NATO. So far these efforts have yielded some 2.5 million items of equipment, worth more than £1.5 billion.

The next three weeks are key. Ukraine needs more long-range artillery and ammunition, and both Russian and NATO calibre types to accompany them. It also seeks anti-ship missiles to counter Russian ships that are able to bombard Ukrainian cities. It is therefore important to say that, if possible, the UK will seek to enable or supply such weapons. I shall keep the House and Members on each Front Bench up to date as we proceed.

The MOD is working day and night, alongside the US, Canada and the EU, to support continued logistical supplies, but not all the aid is lethal. We have also sent significant quantities of non-lethal equipment to Ukraine. To date, we have sent more than 90,000 ration packs, more than 10 pallets of medical

equipment, more than 3,000 pieces of body armour, nearly 77,000 helmets, 3,000 pairs of boots and much more, including communications equipment and ear defence.

On top of our military aid to Ukraine, we contribute to strengthening NATO's collective security, both for the immediate challenge and for the long term. We have temporarily doubled the number of defensive personnel in Estonia. We have sent military personnel to support Lithuanian intelligence, resilience and reconnaissance efforts. We have deployed hundreds of Royal Marines to Poland, and sent offshore vessels and Navy destroyers to the eastern Mediterranean. We have also increased our presence in the skies over south-eastern Europe with four additional Typhoons based in Romania. That means that we now have a full squadron of RAF fighter jets in southern Europe, ready to support NATO tasking. As the Prime Minister announced on Friday, we are also offering a deployment of British Challenger 2 tanks to Poland, to bridge the gap between Poland donating tanks to Ukraine and their replacements arriving from a third country.

Looking further ahead, NATO is reassessing its posture and the UK is leading conversations at NATO about how best the alliance can deter and defend against threats. My NATO colleagues and I tasked the alliance to report to leaders at the summit in June with proposals for concrete, long-term and sustainable changes. Some of us in this House knew that, behind the mask, the Kremlin was not the international statesman it pretended to be. With this invasion of Ukraine, all of Europe can now see the true face of President Putin and his inner circle. His intention is only to destroy, crush and rub out the free peoples of Ukraine. He does not want to preserve. He must not be allowed to prevail. Ukrainians are fighting for their very lives and for our freedoms. The President of Ukraine himself said as much: if Russia stops fighting, there will be peace; if Ukraine stops fighting, there will be no more Ukraine.

Russia

06 Jan 2022 | 706 cc169-184

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs (Elizabeth Truss): I want to update the House on what we are doing to tackle Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. In December I set out how, together with our allies, we will build a network of liberty to ensure that democracy does not just survive but thrives. Of course, as a free, democratic country in Europe, Ukraine is a crucial priority. Thirty years ago, Britain was one of the first countries to recognise Ukraine's independence, and today our commitment to Ukraine is unwavering. We stand with our friend against hostile actors. We will defend democracy at the frontier of freedom in Eastern Europe and around the world. Britain and its allies made this clear at NATO in November and at the G7, which I hosted in Liverpool last month. Any Russian

military incursion into Ukraine would be a massive strategic mistake and would come at a severe cost.

We will not accept the campaign Russia is waging to subvert its democratic neighbours. It is accompanied by baseless rhetoric and disinformation. The Russians have falsely cast Ukraine as a threat to justify their aggressive stance, and they falsely accuse NATO of provocation. This could not be further from the truth. Ukraine's restraint has been commendable, and NATO has always been a defensive alliance. Russia is the aggressor here. It has amassed a huge number of troops along the Ukrainian border and in illegally annexed Crimea.

There is no justification whatsoever for Russia's bellicose stance towards Ukraine. It is unprovoked, and it is part of a wider pattern of behaviour by the Kremlin, reliant on disinformation and mistrust to seek to gain the upper hand. Moscow has long run a campaign to subvert freedom and democracy in Ukraine, from the invasion of 2014 to cyberattacks, disinformation and the weaponisation of energy supplies. At the same time, Moscow is backing the repressive actions of the Lukashenko regime in Belarus, sowing the seeds of discord in the western Balkans and threatening our friends in the Baltics.

I urge Russia to end its malign activity and stick to what has been agreed. That means the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, in which Russia signed up to dispute resolution by dialogue rather than force. It means the 1994 Budapest memorandum on security assurances, in which Russia agreed to uphold Ukraine's territorial integrity. Ukraine gave up its nuclear weapons in exchange for this security guarantee. And it means the 2014 Minsk protocol, in which all parties agreed to a ceasefire in the Donbass region. These agreements, based on the principles of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, must be upheld.

The free world must rise to meet this moment. Britain is stepping up and leading by example. I have spoken out against Russian aggression at the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and NATO, and bilaterally with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Last month I chaired a meeting of the G7 Foreign Ministers in Liverpool. We called on Russia to de-escalate, pursue diplomatic channels and abide by its commitments on the transparency of military activities. We made it clear that any further military incursion into Ukraine would bring massive consequences, including co-ordinated sanctions to impose a severe cost on Russia's interests and economy. The UK is working with our partners on these sanctions, including high-impact measures targeting the Russian financial sector and individuals.

We are also providing crucial economic and security support to Ukraine. I am working closely with Foreign Minister Kuleba. I spoke to him on Tuesday, and last month I welcomed him to London for high-level talks. We are helping Ukraine to strengthen its defences with joint exercises and maritime support

and by training over 20,000 members of its army, with more to come. We are ramping up support for trade in priority areas such as technology and clean energy to £3.5 billion. This includes £1.7 billion to boost Ukraine's naval capability. I look forward to visiting Kiev later this month. We are also supporting stability in the western Balkans, where the Prime Minister has appointed Sir Stuart Peach as special envoy. In Belarus, we were the first European country to put sanctions on the Lukashenko regime, and we were also the first to send in engineers to assist Poland.

This next week will be absolutely critical for peace and security in Europe. Tomorrow I will join an extraordinary meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers. The US-Russia dialogue begins on Sunday, followed by the NATO-Russia Council on Wednesday and the OSCE Permanent Council on Thursday. We will be in talks on the basis of freedom, democracy and the rule of law. It is vital that NATO is united in pushing back against Russia's threatening behaviour. Together we must hold Russia to its longstanding obligations. There can be no rewards for aggression.

Finally, Europe must reduce its dependence on Russian gas. Britain remains opposed to Nord Stream 2, and I am working with allies and partners to highlight the strategic risks of this project. We are reaching a crucial moment. The only way forward is for Russia to de-escalate and pursue a path of diplomacy. We will continue to stand together with our allies, steadfast in support of Ukraine and its future as a free and sovereign democracy. I commend this statement to the House.

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