

Boris Johnson: G7 Summit is a chance to show the world our values

When the leaders of the G7 arrive on the golden strand of Carbis Bay, it will be an extraordinary moment for that lovely Cornish resort – and a crucial moment for the world.

This is the first visit by President Biden to the European continent after five months in office. It is the first time that the leaders of the world's richest and most powerful democracies have had the chance to meet in person since the pandemic began 18 months ago – and it could not come at a better time.

The world needs this meeting. We must be honest: international order and solidarity were badly shaken by COVID. Nations were reduced to beggar my neighbour tactics in the desperate search for PPE, for drugs – and, finally, for vaccines.

At Carbis Bay, we must put those days behind us. This is the moment for the world's greatest and most technologically advanced democracies to shoulder their responsibilities and to vaccinate the world, because no one can be properly protected until everyone has been protected.

We can already be proud of what we have done. It was the deal done between the British government, Oxford scientists and AstraZeneca that ensured this vaccine is now being distributed at cost around the world. As a direct result, 95 per cent of the vaccines distributed by Covax, the global vaccine alliance, are AstraZeneca – and we intend to go further. At Carbis Bay, the G7 will pledge to distribute vaccines to inoculate the world by the end of next year, with millions coming from surplus UK stocks.

We will begin the framing of a new global treaty on pandemic preparedness so the world is never caught out in the same way again.

And we will go further in strengthening the political and economic ties between us, relaunching the G7 as a means of expressing the values that unite us: openness, freedom, democracy and free trade.

We will be joined by our friends, the leaders of India, South Korea, Australia and South Africa, a Democratic XI, with the UK a competitive and creative player in the centre of the field.

We will work together to tackle the world's biggest problems, reducing carbon emissions, fighting the loss of biodiversity and getting another 40 million girls into school by 2025.

With the US we will be drawing up a new Atlantic Charter, 80 years after Churchill and Roosevelt agreed the first in 1941 on the deck of HMS Prince of Wales. It is fitting that this week that battleship's linear successor will provide the backdrop.

President Biden and I will sign a charter that encompasses science, technology and trade and, above all, that underscores our joint commitment to Nato that has been indispensable to our security for decades. The time has come to dispel any sense of gloom and show how Nato is looking ahead to 2030, reinvigorating its plans and doctrines, protecting our allies on Europe's eastern flank and safeguarding our people in the new domains of space and cyberspace.

Britain has the biggest defence budget in Europe, making us central to this effort. We are contributing more troops than any other country to Nato's deployment in Poland and the Baltic states. We have committed our nuclear deterrent and our cybercapabilities to the alliance. Britain is doing more to guarantee the security of our continent than any other European power.

Wherever you look – the G7, Nato, the global struggle against COVID – Britain is the “buckle that fastens, the hyphen that joins” everything together, to adopt Walter Bagehot's phrase. We can do this because of the breadth of our capabilities and friendships.

The UK can at once devise a vaccine against COVID, conduct nearly half of the world's genomic sequencing of new variants, bring the world's most powerful leaders to Cornwall, and send an aircraft carrier to the Indo-Pacific.

But we would never wish to go it alone; on the contrary, we are blessed with alliances that help to keep us safe and advance our values. Now we are putting all of this to work for the benefit of the British people and to ensure this country is a force for good.