

Foreign Secretary James Cleverly makes first visit to East Asia

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- He will demonstrate the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific Tilt, and the UK's ambition to become the European partner of choice with the greatest presence in the region.
- The Foreign Secretary will meet President Yoon Suk-yeol of the Republic of South Korea, Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong of Singapore and deliver a keynote speech at the Milken Asia Summit.

Focused on strengthening bilateral ties and enhancing trade and security links, Foreign Secretary James Cleverly will begin a three-day visit to Japan, Republic of Korea and Singapore this week (26 September).

It is one of his first international visits as Foreign Secretary – following the United Nations General Assembly in New York – demonstrating the growing importance of the Indo-Pacific Tilt, and the UK's ambition to become the European partner of choice with the greatest presence in the region.

The UK and Japan are the closest of friends and partners. Cleverly's visit comes after Prime Minister Liz Truss met Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida at the UN General Assembly in New York, where the leaders looked forward to expanding the UK-Japan relationship. Both countries are working together to further shared goals on security, defence and trade through programmes like the Future Combat Air System (FCAS) and the UK's application to join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

During the visit in Japan, Cleverly will attend the State Funeral of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and meet Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi. While in the Republic of Korea he will meet President Yoon Suk-yeol and visit the Joint Security Area of the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ). Finally in Singapore, Cleverly will meet Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong and deliver a keynote speech at the Milken Asia Summit.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Foreign Secretary, James Cleverly, said:

As I start my visit to the region in Japan, my thoughts are with the Japanese people as we remember the legacy of former Prime Minister Abe – their longest serving prime minister who brought our two countries closer together.

The UK has a long-term commitment to the Indo-Pacific region, as we look to establish a greater and more persistent presence than any other European country. This in turn will boost economic development, strengthen trade ties and enhance security.

While in Japan, the Foreign Secretary will offer condolences at the State Funeral of former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe. In a meeting with Foreign Minister Hayashi, Cleverly will reaffirm the UK's ongoing commitment to its relationship with Japan, its closest security partner in Asia, and the two countries' strong people-to-people links.

Cleverly will then travel to the Republic of Korea to highlight closer cooperation on security, trade and energy and meet President Yoon Suk-yeol. He will visit the Joint Security Area of the Demilitarised Zone with the United Nations Command. With Foreign Minister Park Jin, he will discuss UK-RoK cooperation on global security and economic issues including Ukraine, Russia and China as part of the existing bilateral framework.

The visit will conclude in Singapore, with a keynote speech at the Milken Asia Summit setting out the Foreign Secretary's foreign policy vision for the Indo-Pacific region, and a bilateral meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong.

In recognition of Singapore's role as an important regional finance centre, he will launch the new British Investment International Office, boosting investment in green infrastructure and establishing a significant economic hub. The Foreign Secretary will meet Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong to discuss regional security and trade, and later have dinner with Minister for Foreign Affairs Vivian Balakrishnan.