

Foreign Secretary visits Vietnam to strengthen bilateral ties and cooperation on trade and global challenges

In his second visit within nine months, the Foreign Secretary has met counterpart Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Minister Bui Thanh Son, to discuss the implementation of the UK-Vietnam Strategic Partnership Agreement, in addition to subjects such as the global health security, climate change and Myanmar.

The visit will build momentum for the UK's bid to join the regional trade block – the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). The UK Government is today setting out its approach to membership, alongside the release of the UK's strategic case for seeking CPTPP accession to include scoping and economic assessments.

During the visit, the UK also looked to progress its ambition for 'ASEAN Dialogue Partnership' status, which would allow the UK to further strengthen relations with ASEAN countries, based on shared interests and mutual benefits.

Speaking in Vietnam, Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, said:

The UK greatly values our friendship with Vietnam. Since my last visit, we have made progress on trade and economic ties.

We welcome Vietnam's support for UK's accession to the CPTPP trading block, and I am very grateful for its ASEAN chairmanship last year – laying the foundations towards the UK becoming an ASEAN dialogue partner.

The Foreign Secretary has met President Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the Presidential Palace where climate change and Vietnam's ambition for energy transition were key topics discussed.

Dominic Raab's meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh covered developments within the Strategic Partnership Agreement, COP26, Covid-19 recovery and maritime security. The Strategic Partnership framework sets out cooperation between the two countries for the next ten years.

The Foreign Secretary has also met the Minister of Public Security, To Lam, with topics of discussion including cooperation to tackle illegal migration, human trafficking and transnational crime.

While in Hanoi, the Foreign Secretary delivered opening remarks at the 5th

ASEM (Asia-Europe Meeting) on the UK's ambitions for its 'Indo-Pacific tilt' to an audience of more than fifty countries. In attendance were several regional foreign ministers, including Vietnam's Foreign Minister Son, Singaporean's Foreign Minister Balakrishnan, Cambodian Foreign Minister Sokhonn, Laos' Foreign Minister Kommasith, Korea's Foreign Minister Chung, as well as the European Union's High Representative Borrell, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and Portugal's Vice Foreign Minister, Zacarias.

Today, the Foreign Secretary also announced UK funding to support a network of women peacebuilders and mediators across the region through the ASEAN Women's Peace Registry. The financial contribution will also help ASEAN develop its Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security and support ASEAN member states, including Vietnam, to develop and implement their own National Action Plans.

The visit comes ahead of the UK's Carrier Strike Group led by the HMS Queen Elizabeth, which will make its maiden visit to the region, arriving in Singapore later this year.