

Foreign Secretary's opening statement at a press conference with Baltic Foreign Ministers, 3 March 2022

Thank you, Minister Landsbergis, for bringing us together here together in Vilnius.

The United Kingdom stands with our allies in doing all we can to support Ukraine against President Putin's war of choice. We must ensure Putin fails in this horrific enterprise and his ambitions go no further.

We were pleased to support Lithuania's leadership referring war crimes to the ICC.

I'm here today in Vilnius with our Baltic friends, because I want to say that the UK's commitment to Baltics and to Article 5 are unyielding.

Our Baltic friends know what's at stake, having long lived in the shadow of Russian aggression, and I admire your courage. We are working together to deliver two clear objectives.

First, Putin must lose in Ukraine. We are helping Ukraine to defend itself. Our defensive weapons from the United Kingdom are now being used to stop Russian tanks. But we need to do more.

Secondly, we must contain this aggression. We are reinforcing NATO's Eastern flank and supporting European security through the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force.

We are here in the Baltic Region – we lead and have doubled our enhanced forward presence in Estonia. Our allies are leading troops across the Baltics. British military intelligence are working with Lithuania's military to enhance border defences, including in the Suwalki Gap. 200 troops are doing joint military exercises right now, and we are working together on maritime security.

At the NATO Foreign Ministers' meeting tomorrow, we will be working together to strengthen our collective defence in the light of the changed security situation across Europe. In terms of supporting Ukraine with defensive weaponry, the United Kingdom was the first European country to give defensive military support to Ukraine – and we are now also supporting with humanitarian aid. We pledged £220 million in aid support to Ukraine – and we are the top European donor. And we will do more.

We have also been on the forefront in tightening the vice on the Kremlin through sanctions, and it is vital at this juncture that we keep the foot on gas.

We have worked with the EU, the US and the G7 to cut off funding for Putin's

war machine, kicking Russian banks out of the financial system.

We have also shut our airspace to Russian planes, and we are fast-forwarding sanctions against Russian oligarchs, but we need to go further.

We need to make sure no Russian bank has access to SWIFT, and we need to go further on reducing dependency on hydrocarbons from Russia, including oil, gas and coal. We have also launched sanctions against Belarus for aiding and abetting aggression.

I will be raising these issues at the G7 tomorrow and also at the European Union Foreign Affairs Council, alongside the US, Canada and Ukraine, who have also been invited in these extraordinary circumstances.

This is a struggle not just for Ukraine's freedom and self-determination, but for all of our freedom and security. By continuing to respond with strength, we will together ensure that Putin loses.

And we stand with our brave allies here in the Baltics to do just that.