

Joint leaders statement by the PM and President Duda: 7 April 2022

The UK and Poland today announce the beginning of a new era in their relationship, with a commitment to creating ever deeper ties between our peoples and to revolutionise our cooperation on defence and security. The two countries will begin a programme of joint work to ensure our current cooperation on European security is broadened and strengthened for the years and decades to come. The UK and Poland have a common understanding of the threats and challenges to Euro-Atlantic security and are committed to collective defence through NATO.

As Europe faces its biggest security crisis in decades, with a fellow European democracy under attack, Poland and the UK stand side by side. We consider each other among the closest of our European partners, and are resolved to face the future together. Our cooperation has increased dramatically – demonstrating our commitment to helping the people of Ukraine as well as to each other. As both countries increase our respective defence budgets to record levels, we are today announcing a joint commitment to deepen our cooperation between our armed forces and intelligence organisations – and to pursue projects of mutual benefit through a new programme of defence industrial cooperation.

Our nations have long been clear-eyed about the threat from Putin's Russia. The Russian brutal invasion of Ukraine is an assault on democracy and freedom, and has brought terrible suffering to the Ukrainian people. The UK and Poland are working closely together to support Ukraine through these awful times. We will not cease until Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is restored. We call on Putin to end all hostilities and withdraw Russian forces, with an immediate ceasefire that allows civilians safe passage, food and medical supplies.

Russia's disregard of International law, humanitarian law and human decency is despicable. We are appalled at the reports of war crimes that have been committed by Russian forces against the Ukrainian people. We vow to hold to account those responsible, and will work together, including through Poland's role as OSCE Chair in Office, to collect evidence and support the International Criminal Court war crimes investigation.

Putin's strategy in Ukraine is failing. But his recent decision to move forces away from Kyiv is a regrouping, not a retreat. His ambition is unchanged. We must ensure that his new initiative in the South and East of Ukraine does not succeed. Today, we have agreed to step up urgent military aid to Ukraine. We will work together to facilitate the delivery of lethal and non-lethal aid to Ukraine. And we will work to ensure that the Russian war machine cannot benefit from trade in sectors like energy.

We have agreed to propose a Poland-UK Joint Commission to support Ukraine with the long-term co-ordination of arms supplies and training, help Ukraine

to identify its needs and modernise its military. We have heard clearly the ambition of Ukraine's leaders to move the country on from its reliance on Soviet-era equipment and embrace Western technology. Ukraine's security is ours too.

We welcome our existing defence collaboration, including the Royal Dragoon Guards forming part of the NATO Enhanced Forward Presence, UK military engineers in assisting with managing the migration crisis orchestrated by Lukashenko's Belarus, the Royal Marines in working with Poland on joint exercises, contingency planning, and capacity-building, and the Royal Air Force in flying combat air patrols and providing air-to-air refuelling over Poland.

We are also deeply concerned by the changes to Russia's military presence in Belarus. We will work together to tackle any threat to NATO. We have agreed to increase exercising between our militaries and work together to support a strengthened long-term defence posture for NATO that underwrites all Allies' security, ahead of the NATO Summit in June. We will also step up our joint work to counter cyber threats and disinformation, including through a new joint cyber hub and greater effort to counter Russian propaganda throughout the world.

We consider our bilateral defence co-operation to be strategic in nature and are resolved to take it to a new level. We reiterate our strong commitment to work on Poland's acquisition of new frigates and the Narew air defence programme as flagship industrial and technical initiatives in vital areas for our mutual security. We will also deepen our co-operation on future defence strategy and analysis of security threats. We will work up a new strategic partnership to capture this ambition and build on the Defence & Security Co-operation Treaty that we signed in Warsaw in 2017.

Poland and the UK will continue to support Ukrainians fleeing the conflict. The Polish people have opened their homes and their hearts to welcome the greatest share of Ukrainian refugees, hosting over 1.8 million Ukrainians. They deserve the support of all Europeans. The UK will therefore triple its support to Poland to £30m to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees temporarily located in Poland, including temporary shelter, education and other basic services. The UK visa scheme is open and is uncapped.

Finally, we will pursue new measures to boost bilateral trade. A flourishing trade relationship not only creates jobs and prosperity, but underpins our national security. We will therefore launch a high-level inter-governmental trade dialogue, as well as a new bilateral Business, Trade & Investment Taskforce, bringing together senior leaders from government and business to identify opportunities and strip away trade barriers.

We will take these initiatives forward through a reinvigorated series of Prime Minister-led Inter-Governmental Consultations, supported by the joint Foreign and Defence Minister 'Quadruga' series of meetings, and encapsulate them in a new UK-Poland 2030 agreement. The Consultations will discuss ways to enhance collaboration across the entire range of our relationship,

building upon our strong defence, people-to-people, economic, and cultural ties.