

PM remarks at joint press conference with President Zelenskyy in Kyiv: 24 August 2022

Thank you very much Volodymyr and thank you to the people of Ukraine for the incredible honour that you have done me which is a recognition of the efforts of the UK.

When you rang me at 4 in the morning on that grim day in February and you told me the news that we had been dreading that Putin had been so insane as to invade a sovereign European country,

I told you then that we were shoulder to shoulder with you and that is as true today as it was in that horrific moment.

And I can also tell you that when we met in the high security room in Downing Street to try to understand what was happening, we were filled with foreboding.

We just did not see how this innocent and beautiful country could repel an attack by more than 100 Battalion Tactical Groups, when the suffering and the casualties would be so immense. But you did.

And like one of those indomitable Ukrainian boxers for which this country is justly famous,

you came off the ropes and you hit him with an upper-cut that sent Putin's armies reeling from Kyiv and then a hook to drive them from Kharkiv,

And it became ever clearer to the world that he had fatally underestimated the grit, the will, and above all the price that you were willing to pay to defend the country you love.

And I salute the heroic dead, I salute the families of the bereaved and the injured,

the emergency services who have been called time after time to the scenes of Putin's atrocities.

I salute the bravery of the ordinary people of Ukraine who have just got on with their lives.

The teachers, the students, the children.

In our country today young people are getting their grades for their exams and of course it has been a tough time for them,

because we've all had to cope with the pandemic.

But I ask them all to think of the children of Ukraine,
two thirds of whom have been driven from their homes, two thirds,
and who have seen nearly a fifth of their schools destroyed or damaged.

And yet working by candlelight or in makeshift classrooms, 7,500 of them have
achieved the highest possible grades.

And it is our collective mission to ensure those brilliant students grow up
to use their qualifications to achieve their dreams in a peaceful, prosperous
and independent Ukraine.

And I believe they will, because out of the ashes of your towns and cities,
out of the monstrous scars left by Putin's missiles, something beautiful is
blooming, a flower that the whole world can see and admire and that is the
unconquerable will of the Ukrainians to resist.

And that was what Putin failed to understand.

He simply had no idea how much Ukrainians love this extraordinary country
with its rich black soil and magical golden domes,

how much they treasure the life, the bustle and the freedom and the
Eurovision song contest winning cultural dynamism of Ukraine.

And just as he fatally underestimated Ukraine, he also underestimated the
price the whole world was willing to pay to support Ukraine.

We have and we well and even though we must accept after six months of war
the price is indeed a high price.

And I have come from a United Kingdom where we are battling inflation that is
being driven by the spike in energy prices that is caused by Putin's war.

And we face strikes being driven by trade union's bosses who have the ruinous
belief that the best way to tackle soaring energy prices is with ever higher
wages when that is simply to pour petrol on the flames

and of course we are doing everything we can to deal with the pressures
people face on their cost of living and to help people through the difficult
months ahead.

And that is why it is so important for you to know now that we in Britain
have the strength and the patience to get through these economic difficulties
that have been so recklessly driven and exacerbated by the folly and
malevolence of one man, Vladimir Putin.

And like every other European country we are of course working to end our
dependence on Russian hydrocarbons and we are building those new nuclear
power stations, one a year rather than one every ten years, tens of gigawatts
of new wind farms and I can tell you that we in the UK will not for one
second give in to Putin's economic blackmail because the people of my

country can see with complete clarity what is at stake in Ukraine today.

Yes of course, it is about you and your right to live in peace and freedom and frankly that on its own is enough,

but it is also about all of us, all of us who believe in the principles of freedom and democracy and here today now in Ukraine I believe that history is at a turning point and after decades in which democracy has been on the defensive, on the back foot, we have an opportunity to join you in saying no to tyranny, saying no to those who would stifle Ukrainian liberty and independence and we will. And that is why Ukraine will win.

And we also know that if we are paying in our energy bills for the evils of Vladimir Putin, the people of Ukraine are paying for it in their blood and that is why we know that we must stay the course because if Putin were to succeed, then no country on Russia's perimeter would be safe and if Putin succeeds it would be a green light to every autocrat in the world, a signal that that borders can be changed by force and that is why the British House of Commons, all parties, stood as one, to applaud Volodymyr Zelenskyy and to support the military, diplomatic and economic support that we are giving to Ukraine.

And I'm proud that we have already supplied more arms than any other European country, including 6,900 anti tank missiles, 5000 of the NLAWs, 120 armoured vehicles, Starstreak anti aircraft missiles, anti-ship missiles and now the MLRS

And today I can tell you that more artillery and more ammunition is on its way and 2000 UAVs

and we are training 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers, alongside our allies, and only the other day I was at Catterick in Yorkshire and I met 400 of your recruits that we are helping to train

and these were people from all walks of life, people who weren't soldiers, who had never been to battle before. But the grim reality was that in just a few weeks from now they are heading to that frontline.

And when I listened to their cheerfulness and their courage, I knew Ukraine will win.

And in offering this kind of training and equipment,

I also want to applaud our friends around the world, in the EU, the Poles, the Baltic countries, the Dutch, the Czechs, the French, the Germans, the Italians, they've been steadfast.

But at this juncture it would be right to pay a special tribute to the outstanding global leadership of the United States of America,

And let me be clear, I believe this commitment by the United States of \$40 billion in military support, I think \$59 billion all told, has been indispensable to Ukrainian success

and I thank Joe Biden and his team for what he is doing and to all our friends I simply say this: we must keep going. WE must show that we have the same strategic endurance as the people of Ukraine.

We know that the coming winter will be tough, and that Putin will manipulate Russian energy supplies to try to torment households across Europe

and our first test as friends of Ukraine will be to face down and endure that pressure – to help consumers but also to build up our own supplies

and I believe that as we come through this winter, our position will strengthen and with every week that goes by Putin's position will weaken. And that's why now we must continue and intensify our support for Ukraine. The HIMARS the MLRS and all the systems that are proving so effective in Ukrainian hands.

We cannot afford for one moment to relax the sanctions on Putin, and we must keep up the financial and economic support for Ukraine

and every day around the world we must fight Putin's lies – because it is his war that is pushing up the price of food and oil and gas, not western sanctions

and we must fight any creeping attempt to normalise relations with Putin because it is becoming ever clearer that thanks to the sacrifices of the people of Ukraine, the vaunted Russian offensive in Donbas is failing and therefore this is exactly the moment for your friends to help you strike the Russians just as they begin to wobble.

We know that Putin's troops are tiring, that his losses are colossal, that his supply lines are vulnerable.

We can see how tiny his recent advances have become, and how huge the cost in Russian blood and treasure and tragically in the tears of Russian mothers.

And we also know that this is not the time to advance some flimsy plan for negotiation with someone who is simply not interested.

You can't negotiate with a bear while it's eating your leg, you can't negotiate with a street robber who has you pinned to the floor and we don't need to worry about humiliating Putin any more than we would need to worry about humiliating the bear or the robber.

All that matters today is restoring and preserving the sovereign integrity of Ukraine.

And on this anniversary, let us remember that glorious day 31 years ago when on an 84 per cent turnout 92 per cent supported independence.

And this is now a war for that independence and history teaches us that when a country has a language, an identity, a pride, a love of its traditions, a patriotic feeling that simply grows with every month and year that passes,

and when a country of that kind is engaged in a war for its very existence, my friends, that war is only going to end one way.

Ukraine will win,

and Britain will be by your side.

You have reminded us of values that the world thought it had forgotten,

you have reminded us that freedom and democracy are worth fighting for.

I'm proud to count myself a friend of Ukraine, I thank you for the honour that you've done me today,

and you can count on me and my country in the years ahead.