

PM statement at NATO meeting: 4

December 2019

It was agreed amongst all of us that 70 years after its foundation here in London, it is absolutely true to say that NATO is the most successful alliance in history and it now guarantees the peace and prosperity of a billion people around the world in 29 countries. It will shortly be 30 of course, now that North Macedonia is joining.

And everybody also attested to the fundamental reason for the success of that alliance and it is based on the idea of solidarity, in defence of our values of freedom and democracy, the basic idea of all for one and one for all encapsulated in Article 5 of the North Atlantic treaty that we come to each other's mutual defence.

That's why NATO works and that's why it's so powerful and so successful.

And of course the UK has long argued that you can't be complacent about that, you can't remotely take that for granted, you've got to ensure that we continue to spend on our collective defence and that's why we've made the case for 2% of GDP as the minimum NATO spend for every member.

And we've been successful in that campaign, because if you look at what's happened since the Cardiff summit in 2014, actually there has been a substantial increase in spending by our European friends of \$130 billion dollars – it will rise to \$400 billion by 2024.

And at this meeting here today and country after country pledged or gave an account of how they were going to meet the pledge of 2%.

I was able to sketch out some of the ways which the UK leads in for instance the European contribution to the NATO readiness initiative and we are contributing one armed brigade, two squadrons of fast jets, six major warships – including the two aircraft carriers.

And several other delegations, several other nations, also emphasised that were going to step up their contributions to the readiness initiative amongst other things.

And there was a mood of very great solidarity and determination and a willingness to push NATO forward, not just for the next few years but for the next 70 years.

A real belief in the long-standing value of this alliance.

And we also had good discussions on Russia, how we should respond collectively to Russia, the need to be aware of Russia but also the need to engage.

We discussed cyber, the challenges of what is going on in cyberspace, the

asymmetric warfare and threats that we collectively face, the need for us to engage together in looking at the challenges from space and working together to develop a policy on space.

We also agreed that we would, having heard a really terrible account of the earthquake in Tirana in Albania from Edi Rama, we also agreed that we would act collectively to help the people of Tirana and Durrës to get back on their feet.

And that was the essence of the discussion that I think was extremely practical and extremely harmonious.