

PM to tell NATO leaders: Collective Security must be the foundation of pandemic recovery

- Prime Minister will travel to Brussels today for the first meeting of NATO leaders since 2019
- Discussions expected to focus on Russia, Afghanistan and strengthening NATO for the future
- UK's Integrated Review made huge commitment to NATO, including record increase in defence spending

The Prime Minister will travel to Brussels today (Monday) for a NATO Summit. The meeting is the first between leaders of the Alliance since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic and the election of President Biden.

Earlier this year the UK published a wholesale review of our foreign, defence and security policy. The Integrated Review demonstrated our unwavering commitment to Euro-Atlantic security and the NATO alliance, underpinned by a £24.1 billion investment in the UK's defence capability.

Today the Prime Minister will tell fellow leaders that the global recovery from coronavirus must be underpinned by our shared security. The pandemic has been exacerbated by attacks on that security, both directly through hostile actors carrying out cyber-attacks on allies' health systems, and indirectly through the devastating impact instability and conflict can have on countries' ability to cope with health crises.

The coronavirus pandemic has therefore reinforced the value of NATO and allies must redouble their commitment for the alliance and ensure it adapts to meet the challenges of the future.

The Prime Minister will use his intervention at the Summit to support the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's work on modernising the Alliance. He will say that NATO has an obligation to invest in research and development so we can face down the challenges of the future, including cyber threats and the impact of climate change on the global system.

He will underline his strong support for all the elements of the NATO 2030 modernisation initiative, including stronger deterrence and security, a reinforcement of Allies' shared values, a renewed focus on resilience and innovation, and new policies on climate security, cyber defence and preventing sexual violence in conflict.

The UK is Europe's leading contributor to NATO and is equipping the alliance with next-generation capabilities. This includes the commitment of cyber capability to NATO and the deployment of the Carrier Strike Group, which is currently participating in exercises in the Mediterranean alongside Allies as part of a NATO taskforce before sailing to the Indo-Pacific.

The Prime Minister said:

NATO is not just important to the UK's security, it is our security.

NATO owes it to the billion people we keep safe every day to continually adapt and evolve to meet new challenges and face down emerging threats. This will ensure NATO is still the bedrock of global defence for generations to come.

As we recover from the global devastation wreaked by the coronavirus pandemic we need to do so with secure foundations. The peace and stability brought by NATO has underpinned global prosperity for over 70 years, and I have every confidence it will continue to do so now.

During their Summit today, Allies are expected to discuss the drawdown of troops from Afghanistan and the new chapter in NATO's relationship with the country. The Prime Minister will pay tribute to the 150,000 British troops who served in Afghanistan and emphasise the UK's commitment to support the Government of Afghanistan, including in its efforts to counter terrorism, through all of our diplomatic, development and defence work.

The Prime Minister will also outline the need for NATO to look beyond the Euro Atlantic to address challenges further afield, including in the Indo-Pacific.