

Press release: Foreign Secretary hosts high-level foreign policy talks with South Korea

As a sign of the strength of the close bilateral relationship between the UK and South Korea, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has hosted his South Korean counterpart – Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se – at Lancaster House in London, for annual foreign policy talks covering trade, defence and security.

South Korea is an important strategic partner for the UK, both in Asia and on the world stage. The two ministers reaffirmed the depth of the relationship and the strong commitment to work together on pressing international issues – from collaborating together to counter Daesh, to peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, tackling piracy off the coast of Somalia and enhancing our development cooperation in Africa and other countries.

The Ministers discussed regional and international security, and emphasised the importance of close work with like-minded countries to uphold the rules-based international order. In light of recent North Korean missile tests, the Foreign Secretary reaffirmed the UK's commitment to working closely with South Korea and other international partners to uphold and enforce sanctions against North Korea as a clear sign that the international community will not stand for their nuclear weapons programme that violates multiple UNSC resolutions.

The talks also included our strong defence relationship, which expanded last year with the first ever deployment of RAF Typhoons to South Korea, our biggest contribution to date at last year's US and South Korea military exercises, and the intensification of our already close naval partnership. We will build on this momentum this year and look to expand our cooperation in cyber, intelligence and logistics.

The Foreign Secretary also praised the UK- Korea trade relationship, currently worth nearly £11 billion, which continues to go from strength to strength. South Korea is the third largest destination in Asia for UK goods exports, and the UK is South Korea's fifth largest foreign direct investor.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

South Korea is a very important partner for the UK and our relationship is going from strength to strength. Two trading nations with a global outlook, we have established a trade working group to discuss tackling barriers to market access, trade and investment, with the aim of building on our trade relationship already worth £11 billion.

On the world stage too, we are working together to solve global

problems. Foreign Minister Yun and I have discussed the importance of close cooperation on development assistance, both our ongoing peacekeeping operations in South Sudan, and our commitments to Somalia – including the upcoming conference in London.

And on defence and security, the UK stands absolutely united with South Korea and our international partners in condemning the dangerous and provocative behaviour of the North Korean regime, which is a clear threat to regional and international stability.

Further information