

Prime Minister's address to the nation on the Russian invasion of Ukraine: 24 February 2022

PM addresses the nation on the situation in Ukraine

Shortly after 4 o' clock this morning I spoke to president Zelenskyy of Ukraine to offer the continued support of the UK

because our worst fears have now come true and all our warnings have proved tragically accurate

President Putin of Russia has unleashed war in our European continent. He has attacked a friendly country without any provocation and without any credible excuse

Innumerable missiles and bombs have been raining down on an entirely innocent population

A vast invasion is underway by land by sea and by air.

And this is not in the infamous phrase some faraway country of which we know little

We have Ukrainian friends in this country; neighbours, co-workers

Ukraine is a country that for decades has enjoyed freedom and democracy and the right to choose its own destiny

We – and the world – cannot allow that freedom just to be snuffed out. We cannot and will not just look away.

It is because we have been so alarmed in recent months at the Russian intimidation that the UK became one of the first countries in Europe to send defensive weaponry to help the Ukrainians

Other allies have now done the same and we will do what more we can in the days ahead

Today in concert with our allies we will agree a massive package of economic sanctions designed in time to hobble the Russian economy

And to that end we must also collectively cease the dependence on Russian oil and gas that for too long has given Putin his grip on western politics

Our mission is clear

Diplomatically, politically, economically – and eventually, militarily – this hideous and barbaric venture of Vladimir Putin must end in failure

And so I say to the people of Russia, whose president has just authorised a tidal wave of violence against a fellow Slavic people

The parents of Russian soldiers who will lose their lives.

I cannot believe this is being done in your name or that you really want the pariah status it will bring to the Putin regime

and I say to the Ukrainians in this moment of agony

we are with you we are praying for you and your families

and we are on your side

And if the months ahead are grim, and the flame of freedom burns low

I know that it will blaze bright again in Ukraine

because for all his bombs and tanks and missiles I don't believe that the Russian dictator will ever subdue the national feeling of the Ukrainians and their passionate belief that their country should be free

and I say to the British people and all who have heard the threats from Putin against those who stand with Ukraine

we will of course do everything to keep our country safe

We are joined in our outrage by friends and allies around the world

We will work with them – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine is restored

because this act of wanton and reckless aggression is an attack not just on Ukraine

It is an attack on democracy and freedom in East Europe and around the world

This crisis is about the right of a free, sovereign independent European people to choose their own future

and that is a right that the UK will always defend.