

Speech: Women, Peace and the Security in the Sahel

Well, thank you very much indeed Minister for being with us again today. It's fantastic to have you here and thank you for all the work Sweden has done on this important dossier. Particularly, for keeping it at the forefront of our minds in the Security Council and the way you have tried to ensure that these issues are properly integrated and that the Security Council and the UN more generally gets out of the silos that we're all familiar with. A huge thank you obviously to Ms. Diop and to the Deputy-Secretary-General for leading this mission. I think it's an incredibly important event. Like other speakers, I think it would be an excellent thing if it were to be regular. As my Dutch colleague said, there are lots of areas of the world that would benefit from your insights and your engagement. You can't be everywhere but I think you've made an incredibly good start on this occasion.

I was particularly interested in the assessment of the level of women's participation in decision making and in peace and development processes and I was struck by the same comment about "prefer not to be raped" as my Dutch colleague but I think even more than that was the interest shown by the people you talk to in producing more female candidates. And I think if we had only one thing we could concentrate on, to build that pipeline for the future and to start changing behaviours through governments, I think will be definitely worth thinking further about.

I'd like to say at the outset, Madam President, that we in the UK fully share your goal of having full delivery of [Resolution] 1325 by 2020. So you can count on Britain to work with you here and in Geneva at the United Nations to realize that. I think as other speakers have hinted, the question of women's economic empowerment and their enjoyment of human rights and their role within their families and communities is something that needs to be nurtured and curated. And this is not just a moral issue. This is an economic issue. It's a prosperity issue. Those countries will thrive who properly make use of and develop all the talents of their people. And I think the Kazakh Ambassador set it out very well when he talked about the link between security and development. So we do everyone a favour by intensifying this link between women's participation in economic life and the foundation of peace and security.

And from our perspective, we would like to see even more effort be dedicated to integrating a gender perspective in strategies including those about countering violent extremism and we would like to see more women's involvement in policy planning – so right at the ground floor and I think that was one of the conclusions of the Informal Expert Group on Women Peace and Security in June.

We heard a lot yesterday in the Children in Armed Conflict debate about the stigma of women returnees being disproportionately targeted when they go back to their communities and I think that's just worth putting on the table again

today. It would be very good to hear from the countries themselves what can be done to address that particular issue.

Specifically on the Sahel, the United Kingdom is increasing our regional presence in the Sahel. We opened a mission in Chad in March this year. Chad and Niger sadly sit at the bottom, as I understand it, of the gender equality index and that's why we in the UK want to do more to help those colleagues develop women's empowerment. And I think the efforts that the Security Council, the U.N. system, the African Union and the G5 themselves have undertaken so far to ensure that we can fine-tune adequate measures to empower women is a very good step forward.

From our perspective, we concentrate a lot on providing reproductive health services to displaced populations and refugees and we are prioritising access to voluntary family planning for future support. We spend a lot of our programme funds on climate and environment resilience in eastern Chad and the BRACED program commits to 50 percent women beneficiaries and includes the component on gender-based violence. So I think all those things are contributing, I hope, to what we're talking about today.

We also have a partnership with France arising out of the Anglo-French summit in January to work on gender within the Alliance Sahel; supporting greater mainstreaming on gender across the work of that alliance and if there are other colleagues in the United Nations who would like to know more about that, or even contribute with us, we've been very happy to work with other colleagues on that.

You, Madam President, particularly mentioned education and girls education and again we spoke about that yesterday under the heading of Children in Armed Conflict. I'd just like to highlight that in the Sahel millions of children and youth are out of school, thanks to the presence of terrorist groups, the militias; the conflict between farmers and herders; the difficult economic situation experienced by many families; and of course girls are particularly affected. Sometimes it's because of very basic things like schools lacking hygiene facilities to accommodate the particular needs of girls. The Sahel region, as we heard, has one of the highest rates of child, early and forced marriage in the world. So, the barriers to girls enjoying a proper education are very severe. The United Kingdom therefore has been concentrating on what we call the Girls Education Challenge and it is already working to support 1.5 million girls achieve a quality education. We are one of the largest donors to 'Education Cannot Wait' which Chad is one of the four initial investment countries. So, I just wanted to give a snapshot, Madam President, of some of the things we've been doing but to say how much we share your view that this is an absolutely critical part of being able to embed peace, security and stability in an important region. Thank you.

[Press release: Prime Minister's meeting with Chancellor Kurz of Austria: 9 July 2018](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister welcomed Chancellor Kurz of Austria for dinner at Downing Street this evening.

Their warm and constructive conversation touched on the Chancellor's priorities for Austria's presidency of the EU, Brexit negotiations, migration and the NATO summit.

The Prime Minister gave an update on the UK's Brexit negotiating position and advised that the UK would be publishing a white paper on the UK's future relationship with the EU on Thursday. She urged the EU to give this serious consideration.

Chancellor Kurz noted that a good UK-EU relationship was in the interests of both sides.

On wider issues, the leaders also agreed it was important to work together to tackle illegal migration to Europe. Chancellor Kurz advised that this would be a focus of the informal EU Council which he would host in Salzburg in September. The two leaders also touched on NATO ahead of the Summit in Brussels on Wednesday and on the importance of building ties between the UK and Austria in the digital field.

They closed the dinner by looking ahead to the Western Balkans Summit that the Prime Minister will host with EU and Western Balkan leaders tomorrow. They agreed that the stability and prosperity of the region was a shared priority for the UK and Austria.

[Press release: PM reveals package of measures to promote a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Western](#)

Balkans

Prime Minister Theresa May today announces a package of measures to help the Western Balkans prosper by improving the collective security and economic stability of the region.

The Prime Minister will welcome the six Western Balkan leaders to London today, alongside other European figures such as German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, and the Polish Prime Minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, for the 5th annual Western Balkans Summit under the Berlin Process.

The Berlin Process, established in 2014, has already achieved a great deal in the region – advancing the economic integration, building energy and transport links, and forging connections between civil society and young people.

The package announced today will complement this progress, helping build a more peaceful, prosperous and democratic Western Balkans.

It will help the region to address complex security challenges, particularly around serious and organised crime and drug smuggling, which in turn will help prevent illicit activity on the streets in the UK.

Organised Crime Groups from the Western Balkans have a significant nationwide presence in the UK. UK cooperation with the region and European partners has previously delivered positive results, including bringing down a crime network which was estimated to have imported an average of more than 8,000kg of cocaine a year into the UK, with an estimated street value of £800m.

Encouraged by these results and recognising the importance of the Western Balkans, the Prime Minister wants to go further to strengthen the security and economic integrity of the region.

Prime Minister, Theresa May said:

I am proud to host this year's Western Balkans Summit, bringing together leaders from across the region with European partners to look at how we can ensure the economic stability and collective security of the Western Balkans.

For history shows that a stable and secure Western Balkans region means a more stable and secure Europe. We are leaving the EU next March, but we remain fully committed to improving the prosperity and security of the Western Balkans, and Europe, both now and in the years to come.

The package that I have announced today will help the Western Balkans tackle threats to their progress, such as serious and organised crime, drug trafficking and terrorism, while also having a positive effect in the UK by cutting off criminal activity at the

source and helping prevent crime from reaching British streets.

The new package, which demonstrates the government's enduring commitment to the region, includes:

- increasing UK funding to the region by over 95% from £41 million in 18/19 to £80 million in 20/21 from the Conflict, Security and Stability Fund
- doubling the number of UK staff working in the region on the security issues affecting the UK and the Western Balkans. These experts will help stop crime reaching UK streets and also help strengthen the region's own response to serious and organised crime, terrorism and violent extremism, corruption and money laundering
- launching the Balkans Organised Crime Observatory, jointly with the Austrian and Norwegian governments which will enable civil society to play a more effective role in tackling organised crime and corruption. Led by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime, this will serve as a virtual network for key civil society actors to work together to monitor, report on and expose Serious and Organised Crime and corruption, share research and good practice and improve strategic and operational coordination
- improving the region's cyber capability through a £1m investment in training and advisory activities. This includes direct support to Computer Emergency Response Teams in Serbia and Montenegro, launching a Security Fellowships course on cyber security, and providing strategic support to Governments across the region, and establishing a UK-Western Balkans Security Discourse on Cyber Security to enhance UK bilateral and regional relationships and information sharing among senior cyber officials
- agreeing a Joint Declaration on the Principles of Information-Exchange in the Field of Law Enforcement that will help law enforcement agencies in the region share information more easily in the fight against serious and organised crime and terrorism. Countries will also commit to concrete actions to tackle corruption
- chairing a senior-level Security Commitments Steering Group to push for better exchange of information and best practice, including through establishing regional forums, the first of which for customs officers. These will meet regularly at senior and operational level to discuss strategic approaches and complex transnational financial criminal investigation
- extending the Pan Balkans Strategic Reserve Force (SRF) for another year which is held at readiness in the UK to move into the Western Balkans if the security situation deteriorates or the UK needs to support stability in the region. The current UK commitment to maintain the SRF ends on 31st December. We are extending this for another year as a demonstration of our commitment to maintain security and stability in the Western Balkans
- committing £10 million to help build digital skills and employment prospects for young people in the Western Balkans. The British Council will provide training to children in over 4,500 schools, to bolster

digital literacy and core skills across the region. By providing access to a digital education, this funding will help foster the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs

- providing an additional £1million to help the region address difficult legacy issues, including supporting the organisations working to find and identify the 12,000 victims still missing from the conflicts of the 1990s

[Press release: Defence is important for Welsh prosperity, independent review concludes](#)

Former Defence Minister Philip Dunne has today released a wide-ranging report which highlights the integral role of defence to British prosperity.

- It says defence invests £945 million in Welsh industry
- Wales benefits from MOD expenditure of £300 per person each year
- Defence supports over 6,000 industry jobs

The review was commissioned by the Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson after he launched the Modernising Defence Programme (MDP) to strengthen the Armed Forces in the face of intensifying threats, alongside the Prime Minister and the Chancellor.

The independent review of defence's contribution to national economic and social value by Philip Dunne looks right across the Armed Forces and industry to provide an in-depth picture to inform proposals for reform into the MDP.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Philip Dunne's review shows how vital defence is, not only protecting us from global dangers and safeguarding our national prosperity, but also to our economy by creating thousands of specialist and highly-skilled jobs and creating billions in exports.

He paints a clear picture of how defence and defence industry reaches every corner of the UK and is central to employment in so many cities and towns.

He lays down some key challenges to consider as our Modernising Defence Programme continues to ensure defence is the best it can be in a post-Brexit Britain.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Today's review shows the valuable impact of the defence sector both to our security, but also to the Welsh economy, supporting thousands of jobs and millions of pounds of investment across the country.

Last month's Armed Forces Day in Llandudno was a proud display of Wales' military association, and I've witnessed first hand the incredible spirit of our Welsh Guards on the ground in Afghanistan. The UK Government is working hard to ensure that defence continues to play a crucial part in the fabric of Wales' communities and national economy.

The report also includes a number of recommendations for review, including: further research into the impact of significant procurements on national prosperity; building on the strong relationships with industry suppliers; and considering how the UK's world-leading institutions could be given greater entrepreneurial freedoms.

Wales plays an important role in UK Defence providing over 3,000 regulars and reserves to the Armed Forces, supporting over 6,000 industry jobs and is renowned for its vast training areas which enable the British Army and RAF to perfect their skills to ensure they maintain their military edge over adversaries.

The country benefits from MOD expenditure of £300 per person each year and a huge investment in local industry and commerce of £945 million. The largest MOD industry group expenditure in the nation is with weapons and ammunition totalling £246 million. Key suppliers include Airbus, General Dynamics, GE Aviation, QinetiQ and Raytheon

Wales features some of the most important national defence infrastructure by creating future Army leaders at the Infantry Battle School in Brecon, securing the UK's reputation as a leading global air power with its fast jet pilot training at RAF Valley and of course, the pride of having the second of the Royal Navy's cutting-edge aircraft carriers named HMS Prince of Wales.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb said:

Wales has a proud and historic relationship with our Armed Forces which is clearly demonstrated in the Dunne Review. For centuries, the Welsh have supplied cutting-edge military hardware, world-leading training facilities and some of the finest men and women in our military. I want to see every single aspect of Wales' contribution to Defence expand and develop in the coming years to the benefit of our Armed Forces and our nation.

Philip Dunne said:

I am pleased to have been able to undertake this review and am grateful for the help of all those in and outside the Department who have contributed.

This is the first time for some years that an independent report has sought to look at the whole impact of Defence on the UK economy, its devolved nations and regions in England.

Defence has made a number of important steps in meeting its prosperity objective. It makes a major contribution to our economic well-being, with 500,000 people working directly and indirectly in Defence and over 25,500 apprentices developing skills. In several local communities Defence is one of the leading providers of high skilled jobs.

But there is more that can be done as Defence has to adapt to rapidly evolving technological threats, so too should it seize the opportunities to adapt and improve its own processes to help meet the challenges of the high-tech defence future.

I look forward to seeing how the MOD responds to this report and have confirmed to the Defence Secretary that I am willing to revisit in some months' time how the Department has considered and where it has decided to implement these ideas.

Defence makes a huge contribution across all regions of the UK whether as a major employer, a large investor or as a hub for local communities. Defence is the third largest landowner in the country with 220,000 hectares often benefiting remote and rural communities.

The report reveals that around 500,000 people support defence across the UK. It outlines that the UK's defence industry is one of the world's strongest with an annual turnover of £22 billion supporting 260,000 jobs, many of which are highly skilled and well-paid. Most importantly, he acknowledges that defence is a major contributor to the nation's skills and one of the largest employer of apprentices with over 25,500 currently enrolled.

Dunne also acknowledges that, in addition to the MOD budget of almost £37 billion, defence's direct contribution to GDP features over £7 billion of exports generated each year on average. Just recently a shipbuilding contract worth up to £20 billion was signed between BAE Systems and the Australian government for British-designed Type 26 frigates – the biggest Naval defence contract for a decade.

Defence's relationship as a customer and industrial partner with many high growth sectors in the economy generates more activity, particularly in the aerospace, space, cyber, and increasingly the knowledge economy and creative sectors.

Defence is also driving investment in British industry through the National Shipbuilding Strategy, which was launched last year to transform the UK maritime industry and boost the prosperity of regions, shipyards and maritime supply chains across the country. The MOD is also set to launch a Combat Air Strategy to ensure Britain maintains a world-leading combat air capability.

The MOD will now consider the findings of Philip Dunne's report as work continues on the MDP.

ENDS

[Press release: Home Secretary's statement on the death of Dawn Sturgess](#)

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The death of Dawn Sturgess is shocking and tragic news and I want to express my sincere condolences to her family and friends. This has now become a murder investigation and police and security officials are working around the clock to establish the full facts of the incident.

This desperately sad news only strengthens our resolve to find out exactly what has happened.

As I said earlier today when I visited Amesbury and Salisbury, the Government will continue to provide the local community all the support it needs.