

# Speech: PM meeting with NATO Secretary General Stoltenberg: 10 May 2017

Welcome to Downing Street, it's very good to have the opportunity to talk again in advance of the leaders' meeting at the end of this month. I really wanted to confirm, and reaffirm, the commitment that the UK has to NATO. We see it as the bedrock of UK security and we are pleased to be playing the role that we are in the alliance.

At the moment we have a number of commitments – nearly 1,000 troops in Estonia and Poland and the RAF Typhoons in the Black Sea as part of that project there. We very much consider it important here in the UK that we spend 2% of our GDP on defence and also meet the 20% on equipment commitment as well.

And obviously as we look ahead to the leaders' discussions, there will be a number of issues, including encouraging others to play their role in terms of the support for NATO. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk to you about these and other issues that are on the agenda.

Thank you so much Prime Minister, thank you for welcoming me back to Downing Street. I am really looking forward to discussing with you our preparations for the upcoming meeting of NATO leaders in Brussels on May 25. There are two topics on the agenda – burden sharing and fighting terrorism, and the UK is leading by example on both these fronts.

When it comes to burden sharing, you spend 2% of GDP on defence, I welcome that very much and hope your allies are starting to increase also their resonance in defence. But you also contribute in many other ways. You are now leading our multi-national battalion in Estonia. You are the lead nation for our high readiness force and you are in the skies through the Royal Air Force in the Black Sea region, providing policing.

So when it comes to burden sharing and contributing to our shared security, you are really a lead nation and I thank you for that. Also when it comes to fighting terrorism, I very much appreciate the contributions from the UK. You have been in Afghanistan for many, many years together with NATO allies.

We will address our presence in Afghanistan at the leaders' meeting but we will also address what more NATO can do to step up its efforts to fight international terrorism, including providing support to the counter-Isil coalition. And I strongly believe that the best thing you can do to fight against terrorism is to train local forces, enabling them to stabilise their own country and to fight terrorism themselves.

So there are many important issues on the agenda and we are looking forward to welcoming you to Brussels. So thank you.