

Speech: PM press conference with Australian PM Malcolm Turnbull: 10 July 2017

Good afternoon.

I am pleased to be hosting Prime Minister Turnbull – whom I have known for many years – on his first visit to Downing Street.

This morning, we visited the site of last month's brutal terror attack at Borough Market, where eight people tragically lost their lives, among them two Australians.

We paid tribute to the professionalism and bravery of the police and emergency services who undoubtedly prevented further loss of life, and the heroism of local business owners who shielded people from the terrorists.

I am deeply grateful to Prime Minister Turnbull and the Australian people for the solidarity and support they have shown the UK. At times such as this we are reminded of the importance of the strong ties that have bound our two nations together for over a hundred years.

And we will continue to stand together as close allies and firm friends against those who want to destroy our precious values and our way of life.

As the UK leaves the EU and forges a new role in the world, I am clear we should take the opportunity to strengthen our close partnership with Australia.

So today we have talked about how we can step up our cooperation in a range of areas, including security and defence, trade and investment, and on the world stage.

Let me take each of these in turn.

Security and defence

For over a century our soldiers have served together to preserve the fundamental values of freedom and democracy that we share. They stood shoulder to shoulder in two World Wars, in Iraq and in Afghanistan.

And this month, as we commemorate a hundred years since the Battle of Passchendaele, we again remember their service and their sacrifice.

Today we are leading partners in the Counter-Daesh Coalition, and as the fight moves from the battlefield to the internet we will work together to tackle the spread of Daesh's hateful ideology online.

We have also discussed how we can address the challenge of end-to-end

encryption which creates a safe haven for terrorists to communicate.

Alongside this, our national cyber security centres cooperate closely to crack down on malicious cyber activity. Our law enforcement agencies work together to tackle serious and organised crime – particularly the illegal financial flows that fund criminal gangs and terrorists.

And our intelligence-sharing partnership under the Five Eyes alliance is central to our efforts to address the shared threats we face.

Later this month our Defence and Foreign Ministers will meet in Sydney for their annual ministerial dialogue, to look at how we can deepen our security and defence co-operation to protect our shared interests and project our values around the world.

Trade and investment

The UK and Australia are major trading partners and investors in each other's economic success. Our strong and growing trade relationship is worth close to £14 billion.

We have both made clear our intention to continue to deepen our trade and investment relationship as the UK leaves the EU.

Our Brexit negotiations have started well. And I made clear to Prime Minister Turnbull that an ambitious and comprehensive bilateral trade deal with Australia remains a priority for the UK.

Australia was the first country with whom the UK established a Trade Working Group following the vote to leave the EU, and we are keeping up a regular and productive dialogue on the future of our free trading relationship.

We will continue to work together to push for greater global trade liberalisation and reform.

And I'm pleased to confirm that International Trade Secretary Liam Fox intends to travel to Australia in the coming months as part of these ongoing talks, and ahead of a further meeting of the Working Group later this year.

Global issues

The UK and Australia remain close partners on the international stage. We work alongside each other through the Commonwealth, United Nations and G20 to address the shared global challenges we face.

Last week's missile test in North Korea showed yet again the danger the regime poses to our friends and allies. We are united in our condemnation of their continued nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests, which are in flagrant breach of the UN Security Council resolutions.

And at the G20, the Prime Minister and I discussed with our partners how we can step up international efforts to increase pressure on Pyongyang, and find a peaceful solution to the ongoing threat North Korea poses to global

security.

Australia and Britain are also proud members of the Commonwealth, and its unique, vibrant and diverse alliance of nations. And I am delighted that the UK will host the 2018 Commonwealth Summit in London and Windsor next April, just after the Commonwealth Games take place on the Gold Coast.

The Prime Minister and I are united in our commitment to work together to support the renewal of the Commonwealth. We agreed that the Summit offers a platform to re-energise and revitalise the network, to cement its relevance to this and future generations.

Conclusion

So thank you Prime Minister, thank you Malcolm, for visiting us today, and for the excellent discussions we have had.

It's always a pleasure to welcome our Australian friends to London, even more so when we have just beaten them at cricket. That's women's cricket, of course.

The ties between our countries have endured for generations, and I look forward to working closely with you to strengthen those bonds in the years ahead.