

Speech: PM statement at the G7 Summit in Sicily : 26 May 2017

Good afternoon.

This week, the United Kingdom suffered one of the worst terrorist attacks in our history. The murder of innocent citizens and the deliberate targeting of children appalled people at home and around the world.

Today, G7 leaders have joined Britain in condemning this barbaric act of violence. It is at moments such as this that we are reminded of the fundamental importance of this unique group of nations, and the unity that our membership affords.

Because the threat of terror is one that all our countries face. And now more than ever we must strengthen our resolve to overcome this threat together and stand firm against those who want to destroy our precious values and our way of life.

Yesterday I was at the NATO Summit in Brussels, where member countries reaffirmed their commitment to our transatlantic security alliance, and agreed on the importance of NATO expanding its counter-terrorism role.

And, here in Sicily, the G7 has come together to address the biggest issues we face, from terrorism and conflict, to important foreign policy issues, global trade and climate change.

I will address each in turn.

Counter Terrorism

Today, against the backdrop of Monday's cowardly attack in Manchester, we have discussed what more we can do together to defeat global terror.

We agreed the threat from Daesh is evolving rather than disappearing – as they lose ground in Iraq and Syria, foreign fighters are returning and the group's hateful ideology is spreading online.

Make no mistake: the fight is moving from the battlefield to the internet.

In the UK we are already working with social media companies to halt the spread of extremist material and hateful propaganda that is warping young minds.

But I am clear that corporations can do more. Indeed, they have a social responsibility to now step up their efforts to remove harmful content from their networks.

Today, I called on leaders to do more.

We agreed a range of steps the G7 could take to strengthen its work with tech companies on this vital agenda. And ministers will meet soon to take this forward.

We want companies to develop tools to identify and remove harmful material automatically. And in particular I want to see them report this vile content to the authorities, and block the users who spread it.

And the G7 will put its weight behind the creation of an international industry-led forum where new technologies and tools can be developed and shared to help us deny terrorists their pernicious voice online.

It is also vital we do more to cooperate with our partners in the region to step up returns and prosecutions of foreign fighters. This means improving intelligence-sharing, evidence gathering, and bolstering countries' police and legal processes.

Foreign Policy

The investigation into what happened in Manchester is ongoing. But the suicide bomber's links to Libya undoubtedly shine a spotlight on this largely ungoverned space on the edge of Europe.

So we must redouble our support for a UN-led effort that brings all the parties to the negotiating table and reduces the threat of terror from that region.

Similarly in the case of Syria, we agreed that it will be impossible to defeat terrorism without a political settlement that brings a stable transition away from President Assad.

We welcomed the progress towards de-escalation, but are clear that the regime's backers, Russia and Iran, must use their influence to deliver a ceasefire and move to a genuine political process.

Leaders agreed today that we must challenge Iran's destabilising activity in Syria and the wider region, and that we must continue our efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a nuclear weapons capability.

Leaders were united in their condemnation of North Korea's continued nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests.

We agreed to increase pressure on Pyongyang as we work to secure a peaceful resolution in the region.

Economy and Trade

This afternoon I led a discussion on trade and the global economy. As we prepare to leave the European Union, I reiterated the UK's abiding commitment to free trade and open markets.

But I and my fellow world leaders also recognised that some people feel left behind by globalisation. And that not all countries are playing by the rules.

We need to show our citizens that the global economy can truly work for everyone.

This means recognising the importance of the international rules-based system and the World Trade Organisation in creating a level playing field for trade – but accepting that we need to make the system work better.

And it means taking action to ensure that all our citizens can share in the benefits of globalisation, and support those who feel they have lost out.

The UK's industrial strategy of economic and social reform is helping spread growth and opportunity to all parts of our country and society.

We are ensuring people have the skills to capitalise on the opportunities presented by new technologies and a digital economy at the start of and throughout their careers.

And as we work to make the UK an even more attractive place for businesses to invest and grow, we want companies to act responsibly and play their part in making ours a country that works for everyone.

We had a productive discussion today about the importance of global action against climate change, to safeguard the prosperity and security of future generations.

The UK remains committed to this agenda. We will keep energy affordable and maintain a secure and reliable supply in order to protect the interests of businesses and consumers.

Clearly, the global challenges we face today are more urgent than ever before. When it comes to the fight against terrorism, we can only defeat this evil together, with determined and coordinated action.

As the G7 we stand united today in our commitment to uphold the values we share – and to create a safe, secure and prosperous future for all our citizens.