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Nicola Sturgeon has been accused of wasting a supposedly official trip to the US by “lecturing” Americans about independence.

The First Minister claimed she was making the week-long trip – which occurred while the Scottish Parliament was still sitting – to talk up Scotland’s economy and businesses.

But on a CNN chatshow at the weekend, she instead spoke about her ambitions to break up Britain.

She told the programme: “I’m not going to put a particular timescale on it right now but in the not too distant future, I think Scotland will be an independent country looking to join the EU and looking to take a seat the United Nations.”

Scottish Conservative chief whip Maurice Golden said:

“Nicola Sturgeon took a full week away from government business to bang the drum for independence, and that’s completely unacceptable.

“The First Minister was supposed to use this dubious trip to promote Scotland’s business and economy.

“Instead, she spent her time lecturing America about her selfish plans to break up Britain.”