

Foreign Secretary crosses the Atlantic to expand post-Brexit opportunities for Global Britain

The Foreign Secretary and First Secretary of State Dominic Raab will travel to Canada, the United States of America and Mexico this week to ensure the UK seizes the global opportunities of the future. This North America tour follows the Foreign Secretary's visit to Bangkok last week where he met 20 foreign ministers from the Asia-Pacific region and more widely.

Ahead of the visit, the Foreign Secretary said:

In my first fortnight as Foreign Secretary, I'm travelling East and West to underline that the UK is determined to strengthen our friendships with countries across the world and raise our international horizons.

I'm determined that we fire up our economic relationships with non-European partners. That means working with them now to ensure a smooth transition of our trading arrangements after Brexit and means quickly moving to wide ranging trade deals that boost business, lower prices for consumers and respect our high standards.

I also want to build a stronger alliance to uphold international rule of law and tackle the issues that threaten our security whether that's Iran's menacing behaviour or Russia's destabilising actions in Europe, or the threat from terrorism and climate change.

Last week in Thailand, I met 20 Foreign Ministers from across Asia-Pacific and more widely to make the case for Global Britain. They were consistent in the warmth for Britain and desire to work more closely with us. This week I will cross the Atlantic to some of our oldest allies and a dynamic emerging market.

On his second major visit in as many weeks in office, the Foreign Secretary will visit: Canada – a close foreign policy partner that continues to invest heavily in the UK economy; the US – the UK's greatest ally and the country we trade with most; and Mexico – a fast growing emerging economy where the UK sees huge potential for intensified cooperation. Collectively the three represent £224.8 billion of annual bilateral UK trade with enormous potential for future expansion.

In Toronto (Tuesday 6 August), Washington (Wednesday 7 August) and Mexico City (Thursday 8 August) the Foreign Secretary will reiterate the UK Government's commitment to expanding existing collaboration on the global stage, including our joint commitment to the rules-based international order

and greater coordination across our shared foreign policy priorities.

Further information

SIN SG Facilitates new UK-SG MOU in Digital Government Services

After 3 years of facilitation and support, SIN Singapore has brokered the partnership between the UK's Government Digital Service (GDS) and Singapore's GovTech Agency (GovTech) – with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their collaboration in the design and delivery of digital government services. Under the MoU, GDS and GovTech will share knowledge and best practices in building the digital skills of government officials, and adopting open standards for government information, data and software.

The digital age

Digitalisation is omnipresent in our lives today. Use of the internet and electronic devices have gone from what was once a privilege to a daily necessity. Manufacturers, service providers, and governments have to adapt to the rapidly evolving technological landscape of this new digital age. UK's GDS is a world pioneer in introducing digital government services, and has influenced many other countries to develop their own capabilities in digital governance over the last decade. Spearheaded by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, Singapore's Smart Nation programme incorporates digital government services as is one of six national initiatives to support better living using technology.

Developing the digital government partnership

GDS's leadership in this space is internationally recognised just as Singapore's speed in developing and implementing new initiatives is unparalleled. With both countries recognising the importance of providing digital government services and keen to explore collaborations in this space, SIN Singapore facilitated and supported a number of initiatives to drive this interest. These included high-level introductions (co-ordinating visits to Singapore and the UK), securing UK participation in the annual Digital Government Exchange hosted by GovTech, and working with GovTech to organise a lecture by the Director General of GDS for the Singapore Smart Nation Speaker Series. All these endeavours culminated in the signing of an MoU in London in June 2019.

MoU and beyond

Signing this MoU is a significant milestone in cementing the UK-Singapore partnership in digital government. Not only is this the first international agreement that GovTech has signed, but more importantly, the MoU is well placed to herald new opportunities for the two countries to deepen collaboration on their digital academies, digital identity projects, and the development of new and better digital government services for citizens. A great start and an exciting new milestone under the SG-UK Partnership for the Future.

SIN Singapore Contact: Zhen Hanbin hanbin.zheng@fco.gov.uk

UK joins international maritime security mission in the Gulf

The United Kingdom has reaffirmed its commitment to freedom of navigation and safe passage through the Gulf by playing a leading role in a new international maritime security mission, announced today. The mission will see the Royal Navy working alongside the US navy to assure the security of merchant vessels in the Strait of Hormuz.

Events in the Gulf over the last four months, including attacks on four tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates and the illegal seizure of the British-flagged oil tanker Stena Impero, have seen the threat to commercial shipping rise. The Strait of Hormuz is the busiest narrow shipping passage in the world and a vital transit zone with 20% of the world's oil passing through it every year.

Following constructive discussions at an international conference in Bahrain last week (31st July), the UK has agreed to join an international mission which will largely draw on assets already in the region to increase inter-state maritime cooperation. The UK has also offered to lead one of the mission's Maritime Task Groups.

While exact operational details are being determined, the mission is intended to improve coordination between different countries' militaries and commercial shipping. Both the UK and US are committed to working with allies and partners to encourage others to join and broaden the response to this truly international problem.

The UK has dedicated to doing all it can do defend freedom of navigation, which is crucial for the global trading system and world economy. This new coordinated effort will bolster the work the UK has already being undertaking to this end, including through HMS Duncan and HMS Montrose accompanying UK-

flagged ships. At the same time, the Government remains committed to working with Iran to reduce the current tensions and to the Iranian nuclear deal as the best means of preventing a nuclear-armed Iran.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The UK is determined to ensure her shipping is protected from unlawful threats and for that reason we have today joined the new maritime security mission in the Gulf.

Upholding international maritime law and freedom of passage is in all our interests. We are seeing, across our seas and oceans, too many incidents that seek to challenge such freedoms. The UK is proud to be partnering with other members of the international community to uphold the rules based approach. The deployment of Royal Navy assets is a sign of our commitment to our UK flagged vessels and we look forward to working alongside the US and others to find an international solution to the problems in the Strait of Hormuz.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

It is vital to secure the freedom for all international shipping to navigate the Strait of Hormuz without delay, given the increased threat. This deployment will reinforce security and provide reassurance for shipping. Our aim is to build the broadest international support to uphold freedom of navigation in the region, as protected under international law.

Our approach to Iran hasn't changed. We remain committed to working with Iran and our international partners to de-escalate the situation and maintain the nuclear deal.

Guatemalans invited to apply for the UK Government's prestigious Chevening Scholarships

Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals with demonstrable

leadership potential who also have strong academic backgrounds. The scholarship offers full financial support for future leaders to study for any eligible master's degree at any UK university whilst also gaining access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experiences. Since the programme was created in 1983, over 50,000 outstanding professionals have had the opportunity to develop in the UK through Chevening. There are more than 1,500 scholarships on offer globally for the 2020/2021 academic year, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment towards developing the leaders of tomorrow.

The call for new applicants follows the selection of four scholars from Guatemala, who won an award to study at a UK university this year. Successful applicants have been sharing their stories through the #ChosenForChevening hashtag on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#)

Chevening Scholarships are the UK Government's global scholarship programme, funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and partner organisations. The scholarships support study at UK universities – mostly one year taught master's degrees – for individuals with demonstrable potential to become future leaders, decision-makers, and opinion formers. The British Ambassador to Guatemala, Carolyn Davidson, said:

We are looking for ambitious, professional, and innovative future leaders from any walk of life, who will study hard in the UK, and be open to immersing themselves in the opportunities that arise. Our alumni network is full of dynamic influencers who have shared the same experience that you will. They can offer encouragement, mentorship, advice, and contacts. When you return home after your studies, you should feel well equipped to start making a real difference professionally or socially. There is a lot to potentially gain from submitting a thoughtful application, so if you have what it takes to be a Chevening Scholar, I would encourage you to apply before the 5 November deadline.

Applications to be submitted via www.chevening.org/apply

More information Visit www.chevening.org/Guatemala for detailed information on the eligibility criteria and scholarship specifications.

[Hondurans invited to apply for the UK Government's prestigious Chevening](#)

Scholarships



Chevening Awards Honduras

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We are looking for ambitious, professional, and innovative future leaders from any walk of life, who will study hard in the UK, and be open to immersing themselves in the opportunities that arise. Chevening Scholars are incredibly diverse, so there is no such thing as a 'typical' scholar. That said, if you have demonstrable leadership qualities and you have a clear vision for the future you want to help shape, you are very likely to fit in with our community of over 50,000 alumni worldwide. There is a lot to potentially gain from submitting a thoughtful application, so if you have what it takes to be a Chevening Scholar, I would encourage you to apply before the 5 November deadline.

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1. 5 August 2019 Added translation
2. 5 August 2019 Added translation