

The UK's Integrated Review, Global Britain in a Competitive Age

Thank you Juan Pablo. And good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My thanks to AthenaLab for hosting today's event and to you all for giving your time and attention to join us today. I speak to you from the British Residence here in Santiago. Even though we cannot hold this event in person, I am glad that we are still able to meet and that AthenaLab is still able to continue its important business of exploring the key geo-political and strategic issues that concern us all.

Today is the first of what I hope is for me, many of engagements with AthenaLab and with you all, its active and engaged community in Chile and across the world.

I want to use today's session to talk to you about my government's [Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#), entitled "Global Britain in a Competitive Age", the most comprehensive review of the United Kingdom's overseas policy since the cold war.

Published in March, and produced under the direction of our Prime Minister, the review sets out the UK's international strategy for this decade and beyond. It aims to provide a clear-eyed analysis of the United Kingdom's capabilities, and the opportunities and the threats that we face in the world today and tomorrow.

The product of over a year's work across government and of consultation with a huge range of external organisations and thinkers, the review offers our vision of the UK's role in the world through to 2030 and the action we will take at home and with other countries, including here in Chile, to ensure that we are stronger, safer and more prosperous in a more competitive age.

A month after the review's publication, I hope you would have all had the chance to read its some 111 pages. But whether you have read the review or not, I hope you will find today useful as I expand on what this new foundational text means for Britain's relationship with the world and how its findings will shape the role the UK plays on the global stage.

Britain's place in the world

I wanted to begin with the essential fact that the fortunes of the British people are, inextricably interlinked with events around the world. With limited natural resources, we have always earned our living as a maritime, trading nation. In 2019, as the fifth largest economy in the world, the UK sold goods and services overseas worth £690 billion—fully a third of our gross domestic product—sustaining millions of jobs and livelihoods across the UK, and connecting our economy to very nearly every other market in the world.

Of course, that outward, liberal, free trading perspective is why we enjoy such a close and historic relationship with you here in Chile, as well as across Latin America. Despite the pandemic, in 2020 the UK-Chile bilateral trading relationship was worth over £1.6 billion. Chile remains our third largest trading partner in the region.

That global perspective sits at the heart of the concept of Global Britain, a phrase that you will hear a lot today and that features prominently in the Integrated Review. It is an expression that aims to capture the international nature of the United Kingdom's outlook as a people and as a country, tied to our history and to our future in the world.

Recognising threats

As we look out at the world, at the strategic context we now operate in, we see significant challenges and threats, with three dangerous and dominating trends emerging.

The first is the fraying of the world order that grew up after the Second World War and that seemed stronger than ever just a generation ago. Today, democracy is, it is fair to say, under stress. We see increasing competition between states over interests, norms and values, with authoritarian states and malign actors seeking to undermine the democratic systems and openness that underpin our way of life.

In fact, this decade, the combined GDP of autocratic regimes is expected to exceed the combined GDP of the world's democracies. Tyranny will be richer than freedom. And that matters to us in the United Kingdom, and to you here in Chile and in other democracies across the world, because we know stable, freedom-respecting, democracies are much less likely to go to war, to house terrorists or to trigger large scale flows of immigration. Democracies are generally easier to trade with and easier to co-operate with to solve our shared problems.

The second trend is the rise of new threats. We have all become used to talking about asymmetric warfare since 11 September but technology, twisted to perverse causes, is creating dangerous new weapons and enabling ways to attack us that fall short of armed conflict.

As the United Kingdom, we know this all too well. Three years ago last month, the Russian state used a chemical weapon in Salisbury, killing an innocent British citizen, and bringing fear to a tranquil British city. At the same time states, terrorist groups and criminal gangs are exploiting technology to prey on our homes, our businesses and our infrastructure.

The third trend of our times is perhaps the most dangerous. That is the rise of what we can only consider as potentially existential threats. Threats to our civilisation, threats to large swathes of the world's population, or even threats to our planet itself.

We can all see how COVID has shown just how interconnected we all are in the modern world. We face too the possibility of catastrophic climate change. And

we see nuclear weapons technology proliferating, and a very real risk that it could fall into the hands of people who can't be reasoned with.

Our response

Despite all these threats, we do not believe we should wallow in despair or frustration. Rather, we believe there are powerful reasons to feel optimistic about the future. For the United Kingdom but also for Chile, for the wider Latin American region and the world.

Our fraying international order can be repaired and reinforced. We can counter these new threats and these new challenges, as we have shown during this pandemic, through the collaboration of scientists to innovate new vaccines and of governments to strengthen equitable access to them.

We can demonstrate that the benefits of liberal democracies and free markets are the best model for the social and economic advancement of humankind. We can shape the norms that govern new technology to ensure we benefit while maintaining our security and freedoms. And we can ensure countries work together to tackle the biggest global challenges.

We believe Britain has a central, driving, role to play in all of this, working with our friends and allies, with countries that share our core convictions, such as Chile.

Strategic priorities

The first priority emerging out of the review is to grow and nurture the UK's capacity for scientific and technological innovation in pursuit of sustaining and growing the UK's strategic advantage. The rapid pace of change in technology is transforming aspects of all our lives, fundamentally reshaping our economy and society.

So the review sets out how the UK will harness our existing comparative advantage in tech and science to stake new ground as a science super-power and as a responsible and democratic cyber-power, to strengthen both our domestic prosperity and our international relationships.

To do this, we are increasing our government investment in advanced science and technology research to 2.4 percent of the UK's GDP; we will invest £800 million to set up a new advanced research and invention agency that will back "breakthrough" technology; and we have established a National Cyber Defence Force capable of delivering offensive cyber operations

Our second strategic priority will be to double down on the UK's post-Brexit, pioneering, strategic approach to free trade.

That is why since leaving the European Union, the UK has agreed trade deals with 67 countries, including Chile, as well as the EU, and that is why we have launched the UK's negotiations to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

We are pleased that the Chilean government supports the UK's accession to the treaty. Joining the £9 trillion free trade pact would strengthen the UK's access to key, modern economies, such as Chile's, and create new opportunities for future industries like tech and digital services, data, and renewable energy.

And alongside our efforts to reach new markets, the review sets out how we will work to strengthen the global trading system and update the global regulatory environment, especially on the environment, services and digital sector. We are committed to unblocking protectionism, to unleash the power of global free trade to help the world bounce back stronger, and bounce back greener, from the economic impact of the pandemic.

Investing in both our science and technology expertise and our economic resilience are vital elements of the third strategic priority articulated in the review, which is our security.

The UK has decided to invest an extra £24 billion in defence over the next four years, allowing the wholesale modernisation of the UK's armed forces, restoring Britain's position as the foremost naval power in Europe and taking forward the renewal of our nuclear deterrent.

Later this year, HMS Queen Elizabeth, the Royal Navy's flagship aircraft carrier will embark on her maiden deployment, leading a carrier strike group on a 20,000-mile voyage to the Indo-Pacific and back, exercising with Britain's allies and partners along the way and demonstrating the importance that we attach to freedom of the seas.

We will spend nearly £7 billion over next 4 years in defence-related research and development. Through the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, and our partnerships with business, we will remain a world-leader in cyber-security. And through the UK's new National Cyber Force, we are investing to stay ahead of the unholy alliance of hostile states and criminal gangs that prey on our PCs, tablets and our mobile phones, to steal, to spy or to spread lies.

We will continue too to adapt to meet the frankly predatory opportunism of states such as Russia, Iran, North Korea and some others.

The fourth and final strategic priority is for the UK to step forward as a force for good in the world.

From COVID to the threat of climate change, it has never been plainer that the UK's national interest is inextricably bound up in tackling the international challenges that touch us all. We believe that as a government that we can, and we should, help alleviate the worst suffering in the world, that we have a moral responsibility and an indivisible stake in our planet, and the broader conditions of peace and stability that underpin them. So we are determined that the UK will join our friends to ensure that free societies flourish, sharing the risks and burdens of addressing the world's toughest problems.

We see that clearly in the UK's commitment to strengthening the global

response to the Covid pandemic. The UK is the world's leading contributor to the global vaccine alliances working flat out to defeat Covid-19, contributing £548 million towards COVAX, the international mechanism designed to ensure equitable, fair and rapid access to Covid-19 vaccines and £1.6 billion towards Gavi,. We do this not only to act on our sense of fairness but also because we know that in this global we will not be safe until everyone is safe.

That same commitment to fairness and to justice means that we will continue to support open societies and defend human rights. The UK has lead the international community's condemnation of the military coup in Myanmar, swiftly introducing sanctions targeting military figures for serious human rights violations. We will continue too to lead the international community in expressing our profound concern over China's mass detention of the Uyghur people in Xinjiang province and to urge China to uphold its freely assumed international human rights obligations. And it is why we have also have offered a place—a refuge and abode —to 3 million Hong Kong Chinese who may be in fear of persecution as a result of what is happening in Hong Kong.

Conclusion

To conclude, and as we look ahead, 2021 offers us, as the United Kingdom, a unique opportunity to redefine and re-establish the Great Britain's place in the world. We hold the Presidency of the G7. And we will succeed Chile as we take on the Presidency of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference in November. Our departure from the EU has provided us a unique opportunity to reconsider many aspects of our domestic and foreign policy, building on existing friendships but also looking further afield.

The Integrated Review sets out how we will go about doing that. With the extra investment and new capabilities it provides, we believe United Kingdom can thrive in an ever more competitive world and fulfil our historic mission as a force for good, maximising the opportunities for the UK but also inspiring others to follow us in standing up for what is right.

I look forward to hearing your reflections and to continuing the discussion. Back to you Juan Pablo.