

# Defence Secretary Vietnam Diplomatic Academy speech

Good afternoon everyone.

Thank you very much for allowing me to speak today. It's huge pleasure to be here in Vietnam at the end of my long trip which I started two weeks ago from Washington, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and a short stop in Cyprus on my way back to the United Kingdom. It's been an enlightening visit to see through the eyes of various nations their views about where we are, today threats and challenges and what we should all do to counter them.

I want to thank Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and Minister Phan Van Giang for our productive meetings earlier today and now the Diplomatic Academy for hosting me this afternoon.

It is a privilege to speak at such an esteemed institution, the alumni of which include numerous ministers, who I can assure you are applying the lessons from their studies with great effectiveness!

I first met, virtually, I'm afraid with my Vietnamese colleagues last December. What struck me then, as it has again on this visit, is just how much we actually have in common, despite our very different national systems.

We share many of the same values including the same belief that all nations have the right to chart their own course, trading globally and seizing the opportunities available to them.

And a shared understanding of the importance of the rule of law for accomplishing those things – especially upholding the law of the sea and freedom of navigation, which we are here today to discuss.

Since that first meeting we have released our Integrated Review of foreign, security, defence and development policy.

I won't rehearse the details because time is short and I am here also to listen to you.

But suffice to say it is all about working with international partners to promote those shared values in what is an increasingly anxious and competitive age – something that I note your own Defence White Paper here in Vietnam, published in 2019, identified as a 'fierce strategic rivalry among major powers'.

We agree and our review goes on to identify the Indo-Pacific as the region of fastest growing economic and political importance in this competitive age. Not just of importance to 'Global Britain' but to the world, as it offers some of our biggest opportunities but also poses some of the biggest threats in the region.

This region is the world's growth engine – home to half the world's people and 40% of global GDP. You have the enviable strengths of youthful demographics, world-class education, innovative industries, and a strong manufacturing base.

So it is no wonder that some of the fastest-growing economies are here and Vietnam that you are at the forefront of that growth.

Your opening to the world ('Doi Moi') has generated prosperity through commerce – quadrupling trade in a decade is a remarkable achievement. And I hope we can help you to go further, following the signing of our Free Trade Agreement last December.

But the peace and prosperity of this region has enjoyed in recent decades are now under threat.

There are multiple potential flashpoints.

From unresolved territorial disputes to ongoing cyber-attacks on an epic scale.

From aggressor states coercing regional neighbours, to non-state threats like serious organised crime and terrorism.

Not to mention climate change, migration, and all their associated pressures on human security.

So there is no doubt that your security is our security because the threats that emanate from this region affect us all, regardless of where we call home. And the threats emanating from our region also affects you here and also the Pacific. And because we depend upon the 'global commons' – whether shipping lanes or cyber highways – for our shared prosperity.

And because, more disturbingly, the Indo-Pacific is increasingly the crucible of competition in which our way of life is being undermined by those who don't share our values.

The international system that has provided order and promoted prosperity for the last seventy years is once again under challenge.

In the UK, our Prime Minister has set our vision for becoming the country best-equipped for that competitive age: stronger, more secure, resilient, prosperous and proactive, as a problem-solving and burden-sharing nation with a global perspective.

In this more competitive age, a 'Global Britain' has no choice but to step up, to take on those challenges and shape the opportunities of the years ahead, both alongside traditional allies but also amongst our friends, such as Vietnam.

That means integrating Britain's soft and hard power because defence underpins diplomatic and economic power.

That's why the UK is modernising our defence capabilities, increasing our spending by £24 billion over the next four years and making our Armed Forces more forward, more present, and proactive around the world.

That's why UK diplomacy is working hand-in-hand with our Armed Forces – as demonstrated by my colleague and friend Nigel Adams, Minister for Asia, joining us here today. Global Britain is the team effort.

And that's why, together, we are pursuing our goal of the UK being the European partner with the broadest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific, committed for the long term, with closer and deeper partnerships both bilaterally and multilaterally.

As part of that we are adapting our Defence posture by 'tilting' towards the region. We are investing in our defence diplomacy network and reaching out to partners through a comprehensive programme of engagements and exchanges, shared training, exercising, and partnered deployments.

The UK's friendship with Vietnam is already growing, particularly through our work in recent years on UN Peace Keeping Operations.

Not only do such deployments illustrate our increased cooperation and commitment to uphold shared values across the globe.

But they also offer abundant opportunities to learn lessons from each other, as was immediately obvious this morning, when I met your military medical officers who recently served in South Sudan alongside British forces on a UN mission.

So, before we break for discussion, I want to highlight three elements, in particular, that will come to define the UK's future approach here and across the region.

First, we will stand up for our values – freedom, human rights and the rule of law.

We are here to discuss maritime security and our interests at sea – from fishing to navigation – and they are underpinned by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

We are here committed to upholding the rights and freedoms under the Convention, including the rights of littoral States in their Exclusive Economic Zones.

In recent statements, the UK has objected to Chinese claims based on the so called 'nine dash line' and 'offshore archipelagos' concept as being unfounded in UNCLOS, and we agree with the findings of the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award in this respect.

We've seen Vietnam fishing vessels being rammed or even sunk and Chinese vessels congregating around Whitsun Reef in the Spratlys – threatening regional stability and undermining the rule of law.

And let us be clear, that is not just a regional issue, nor is it even just a maritime issue. If the terms of a law-making international treaty, bearing the signature of 168 parties, can be junked on a whim, it becomes not just an attack on one or other article or treaty but a wholesale assault on the international system.

Which is why we are also becoming more proactive and more persistently engaged in the region.

The UK Armed Forces are no longer being held as a force of last resort. They are becoming more present and active around the world. They are increasingly acting below the threshold of open conflict to uphold those values, secure our interests, partner our friends, and enable our allies – whether they are in the Euro-Atlantic or the Indo-Pacific.

That's why you are seeing us increasing our maritime presence in the Indo-Pacific to both uphold the rules based international order and to stand firm alongside friends in the region.

And there's no greater demonstration of that commitment than HMS Queen Elizabeth's arrival.

She leads a multinational Carrier Strike Group, as the first fifth-generation carrier flying fifth-generation fighter aircraft.

But it is her convening power, whether conducting passage exercises or port visits, that is really strengthening our friendships in this strategically vital corner of the globe. So the Carrier Strike Group really is the embodiment of everything UK Defence is seeking to achieve through our Integrated Review – a major multilateral deployment of cutting-edge military capabilities, partnering with our closest of allies – The United States and the Netherlands, not to confront an adversary in a crisis but to confidently project our shared values.

And my final point – the third feature of our regional approach – is that we must invoke the spirit of partnership.

Partnerships reduce our vulnerabilities, improve our resilience, and help us counter everything from state threats to transnational challenges.

Partnerships are capabilities in their own right and they are what distinguish us from our adversaries.

So this year, as we celebrate fifty years of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) with our Australian, New Zealand, Singaporean and Malaysian the oldest effective agreement in the region, we are also looking to deepen our relationship with ASEAN.

I believe it is imperative to work with our ASEAN friends. Following the "ASEAN way" in pursuit of a peaceful, stable and prosperous world.

And, as a prospective ASEAN Dialogue Partner, we will seek to work together on global challenges, support ASEAN's central role in regional stability and

prosperity while enabling sustainable development in South East Asia.

But we also want to strengthen our bilateral partnerships, especially with our friends in Vietnam.

I know you share our desire to safeguard international stability – I saw that in your brave peace keepers this morning and was struck by their passion and belief in the mission in South Sudan.

And I recognised that as the very same commitment and conviction that I saw the eyes of our own professional personnel. So it's time we harnessed their energy.

We have a long-standing Strategic Partnership and are developing the Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding, but I believe the United Kingdom and Vietnam can still go further; whether on maritime security, peace keeping operations, staff talks, capability developments, shared training or combined exercises.

Which is one of the reasons I am here in Hanoi, exploring ways to expand and deepen our partnership.

In these times of Covid, we need no reminding that both the challenges and the opportunities that the world will face – and this region in particular faces – are becoming ever-more complex and resilience through partnerships is ever-more important.

Yet in the global response to this pandemic, we are seeing nations follow two divergent paths, the bullying and buying of client states on one hand, versus the open and honest offering of friendship to others.

As I have laid out, the United Kingdom offers genuine partnership, based on shared values and a commitment to proactively and persistently promoting them throughout the region.

The United Kingdom has historically had a reputation for fair play. No matter how big or small you are, how rich or poor. All nations should treat each other fairly, with respect, and it is the likes of the UN convention that safeguards that belief. As a P5 nation of United Nations, we should not only uphold those laws, but we have a duty to uphold them around the globe where ever we are.

And I am very glad that this is my first visit to Vietnam and the first visit of as a United Kingdom Defence Secretary. That we recognise that working together in a partnership, strengthen our resilience, and uphold rule of law and collectively we can make sure we move forward for the prosperity of our people.

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# Nationwide search for climate leaders launched

- With 100 days to go until the UN climate change summit COP26, 13 ambassadors are encouraging the country to follow their green footsteps and play their part in tackling climate change
- The first tranche of 'One Step Greener' ambassadors include Dame Jackie Daniel (NHS), Hugo Chambers (Sainsbury's), Toby McCartney (MacRebur), Jasmine Allen (SSE) and Alice Powell (Envision Virgin Racing)
- Nation to nominate everyday climate leaders to be part of the 26 'One Step Greener' Ambassadors who symbolise the best in UK climate leadership and whose stories will be showcased at the crucial summit in November

People from across the country will have the chance to showcase their stories at the major climate summit COP26 in Glasgow, as a search for everyday climate leaders gets underway today (Saturday 24 July).

In the lead up to COP26 with less than 100 days to go, the UK Government is calling on people from all walks of life to join the 'One Step Greener' movement on social media by sharing how they are doing their bit for the environment, championing climate leaders in their communities, and inspiring others to follow their lead. Whether big or small, one or many, green steps around the country can culminate in a large collective impact in helping make Britain a more sustainable and greener place.

The nation will also be able to nominate people in their communities who they think are making a big difference in the fight against climate change. They will have the chance to become 'One Step Greener' Ambassadors and showcase their stories at COP26 this November – which aims to be the most inclusive COP ever. Those nominated could be family members, friends, colleagues, community leaders or entrepreneurs: anyone who is taking action to tackle climate change and inspiring others to follow in their green footsteps.

Leading the charge are 13 inspiring people, announced today as the first ambassadors for the 'One Step Greener' initiative, who will be launching the search for another 13 extraordinary individuals ahead of COP26 – making 26 everyday climate leaders in the UK to mark the 26th climate summit of its kind.

The 'One Step Greener' Ambassadors will come from all walks of life in their pursuit of a greener future, as they come together with government, businesses, community groups, schools and citizens in taking steps to tackle climate change.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UK has made huge strides towards a greener future, with new

records in renewable energy and new targets for slashing emissions. But there are also thousands of people across the country doing their bit too, from embarking on green careers and building sustainable businesses to reducing their use of plastic and taking part in conservation projects.

We can all do our bit to help tackle climate change. That's why we're challenging everyone to go one step greener in the next 100 days and win the chance to become an ambassador ahead of COP26 in Glasgow this November.

COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

In my many meetings with ministers and governments around the world we discuss the big changes which urgently need to be made to tackle climate change. Setting ambitious emissions reductions targets, supporting developing nations, and protecting nature are all vital if we are to keep temperatures from rising above 1.5C.

But there is a role in tackling climate change for everyone, and it is heartening to see all parts of society embracing their responsibility to safeguard our precious planet, no matter how big or small a step.

World leaders will meet in Glasgow with the aim of agreeing how to tackle the urgent threat of global climate change. The UK is working to prevent global temperatures rising above 1.5C and to protect the planet and people from the intensifying impacts of climate change, which unchecked will lead to further catastrophic flooding, bush fires, extreme weather and the mass extinction of species. The UK has been leading the way and shown that green growth is possible. The UK was also the first country to commit to reduce carbon emissions by 78% by 2035 and is on course to be the fastest G7 country to decarbonise cars and vans by 2030.

British female racing driver Alice Powell has become one of the first 'One Step Greener' Ambassadors. Yesterday, Powell arrived in her ground-breaking Envision Virgin Racing Formula E Car racing car which is redefining the green future of motor sport. There she met with the Prime Minister's Spokesperson for COP26 Allegra Stratton to discuss her involvement as an Ambassador for the 'One Step Greener' initiative. Alice and the Envision Virgin Racing team will also host COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma at the London ePrix, an annual race of the single-seater, electrically powered Formula E championship.

The 'One Step Greener' Ambassadors have been announced today to cover all parts of the UK and include:

**Dame Jackie Daniel – NHS Trust CEO**

Dame Jackie began her NHS career as a nurse before moving into management and

has been a Chief Executive Officer for 20 years leading a range of acute, mental health and specialist trusts. She was appointed as Chief Executive of Newcastle Hospitals in March 2018 and since then, the Trust has retained its outstanding CQC status and became the first NHS organisation to pledge to reach Net Zero Carbon. She was recently named as one of the top five chief executives of the year in the HSJ awards for 2021.

Dame Jackie Daniel states,

COP26 will be a defining moment in the global effort to tackle climate change and I am honoured to be named a One Step Greener Ambassador. Climate change poses a major threat to people's and the planet's health which is why the NHS in England has committed to become the world's first carbon net zero national health system. I hope I can encourage the public to do their bit to protect our planet as well as nominating others who are going One Step Greener.

### **Hugo Chambers – Sustainable Sourcing Manager and Corporate Responsibility and Sustainability at Sainsbury's**

Hugo's job at Sainsbury's is to help reduce the impact of our food on the planet, whether that's lowering the carbon footprint of products such as coffee or cheese or ensuring the palm oil in their products do not contribute to the deforestation of tropical forests. Outside of work, Hugo also tries to make greener decisions where he can such as cycling to work and trying to eat a more healthy and sustainable diet.

Hugo Chambers states,

My passion for protecting the environment is central to the work that I do, which is to help reduce the impact of our food consumption on the planet, whether that's by helping to reduce the carbon footprint of products, or ensuring that palm oil in our products doesn't contribute to the deforestation of tropical forests. I hope that as a One Step Greener Ambassador, I can help inspire and encourage people up and down the country to lead healthier, more sustainable lives as the UK gets ready to host COP26 in November. Who are you going to nominate to be a One Step Greener Ambassador?

The full list of 13 are Dame Jackie Daniel (NHS), Alice Powell (Envision Virgin Racing), Hugo Chambers (Sainsbury's), Jasmine Allen (SSE), Toby McCartney (MacRebur), Sara Thomson (Leith Collection), James Lloyd-Jones (Jones Food Company), Emer Rafferty (youth environmentalist), Ade Adepitan (Paralympic medalist and TV presenter), Max La Manna (low-waste chef), Rob Thompson (Odyssey Innovation), Ash Dykes (adventurer and extreme athlete) and Buffy Buroughs (Green Gathering Festival).

Nominations will close on 1 October and the final 26 'One Step Greener'



Ambassadors will be announced on 7 October, 26 days before the crucial summit begins.

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## Daily contact testing rolled out to further critical sectors

Further targeted daily contact testing is being rolled out in England to frontline emergency services and some transport workers, following the government's close engagement with these sectors in order to avoid any potential disruption to crucial services.

Following clinical trial results, daily contact testing will be rolled out to further critical workplaces in England so that contacts who would otherwise be self-isolating can instead take daily tests, with an expected initial additional 200 testing sites.

Delivering daily contact testing to these critical workplaces builds on pioneering work by NHS Test and Trace and Public Health England which puts the UK at the vanguard of scientific research.

New testing sites will be allocated for frontline police and fire services to ensure critical staff can continue their vital work.

Frontline Border Force staff, working at some ports across the country will be able to take part in the Border Force run testing centres.

In addition, to ensure the transportation of critical goods and supplies and the smooth running of England's transport network, testing sites will be set up to support the most critical parts of our transport and freight systems, which we will keep under review through close engagement with the transport industry. These include rail infrastructure, ports and airports, and haulage firms.

Daily testing will enable eligible workers who have received alerts from the NHS Covid 19 app or have been called by NHS Test and Trace and told they are a contact and to isolate will be able to continue working if they test negative.

Employers and workers taking part in Daily Contact Testing will be provided with guidance about the protocols they must follow.

### **Home Secretary Priti Patel said:**

Our brave police officers and fire fighters have shown throughout the pandemic that they have worked tirelessly to keep us safe and

serve their communities.

Border Force have played a vital role in the national effort to keep goods and supplies coming into the country as well as keeping our borders secure.

Daily testing will keep our frontline teams safe while they continue to serve the public and communities across our country.

### **Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:**

Our transport workers have done an incredible job throughout the pandemic to keep this country moving.

To make sure they can continue to do their vital work safely, I'm pleased we'll be rolling out testing sites to key transport locations – enabling staff to continue working with confidence.

### **Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:**

Throughout the pandemic, our frontline emergency services have continued to keep us all safe, overcoming enormous challenges to do so, while workers across the transport network have kept the country moving

As we learn to live with the virus, we must do everything we can to break chains of transmission and stop the spread of the virus. Daily contact testing of workers in these critical sectors will help to minimise any disruption caused by rising cases in the coming weeks, while ensuring staff are not put at risk.

Self-isolation remains an essential tool for suppressing the transmission of the virus.

People who have been identified as contacts are at least five times more likely to be infected with COVID-19 than other members of the public. Vaccines are highly effective at reducing the risk of serious illness, hospitalisation and death, and we are encouraging everyone to continue to get the vaccine to enable us to tackle the virus.

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**[Government provides £26.2 million for](#)**

# Long Stratton Bypass scheme

Norfolk is set to benefit from £26.2 million in government funding to help construct the planned A140 Long Stratton Bypass, Roads Minister Baroness Vere announced today (24 July 2021).

The scheme will see a new 2.5-mile road built to the east of Long Stratton, ensuring faster and smoother journeys while directly supporting plans for 1,800 new homes and the development of new employment land in the area. The bypass is designed to significantly ease congestion through the town, reducing noise and air pollution while providing better accessibility to the town centre for cyclists and pedestrians.

The investment comes as part of the government's drive to build back better from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and boost transport links across the country.

Roads Minister Baroness Vere said:

This new scheme will provide a huge boost to Long Stratton and Norfolk by ensuring faster, smoother journeys, cutting congestion and noise pollution, and allowing the construction of 1,800 new homes in the area.

This government is dedicated to levelling up across the country and we will continue to support regional economies by investing in vital local transport projects like this one.

Cllr Martin Wilby, Norfolk County Council's cabinet member for highways, infrastructure and transport and member of the Transport East partnership, said:

This is fantastic news and a most timely announcement from government, particularly in view of the COVID-19 recovery. The A140 through Long Stratton is a real pinch point that affects thousands of road users and the people who live and work in Long Stratton, on a daily basis.

We want to deliver this vital scheme as soon as possible to cut congestion, help the local economy and vastly improve this major regionally important route linking Norwich and Ipswich. The bypass is set to create hundreds of new jobs and homes, open up improvements for cycling and walking, and solve traffic and transport issues local people have been facing for more than a generation.

Currently, journeys in and out of Long Stratton are often very slow along the

narrow route into the town centre. The new bypass, with speed limits of between 50 mph and 60 mph, will significantly reduce journey times. It will include 3 new roundabout junctions as well as a new footbridge to allow pedestrians and cyclists to cross safely.

The full cost of the Long Stratton Bypass scheme will be £37.4 million, with Norfolk County Council securing £9.2 million on top of the government's £26.2 million investment.

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## **COP26 President-Designate welcomes agreement from G20 to limit warming to 1.5C but urges further action on coal phase out**

- Despite progress by a growing number of countries, the Ministerial could not agree on phasing out coal power and overseas coal financing
- COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma called on G20 leaders and the major emitters to go further ahead of COP26 to protect countries vulnerable to climate change

The COP26 President-Designate, Alok Sharma, has welcomed the agreement by the G20 but called for further action to keep the 1.5C temperature limit within reach following the Climate and Energy Ministers meeting in Naples.

Following Mr Sharma's intervention calling for urgent climate action, G20 Ministers agreed to accelerate action in 2020s, to submit ambitious 2030 targets to reduce emissions by COP26 in Glasgow, and urged members to develop long term strategies aligned with keeping 1.5C in reach and a net zero future.

But the COP26 President Designate expressed disappointment that no decision could be made by Climate and Environment Ministers on the phase out of coal power and international coal financing which – along with accelerating the transition to clean vehicles and halting deforestation – are crucial to keeping warming to 1.5C.

G20 leaders will now address the issue at their meeting later this year in October ahead of November's COP26 summit.

Today's meeting was hosted by COP26 Presidency partners Italy in their role as Presidency of the G20. UK Energy Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan also attended.

In his opening remarks to the meeting, Mr Sharma had stressed that keeping

1.5 degrees within reach was incompatible with the continuation of unabated coal power and international coal financing. Despite intense discussions on this, the group was unable to reach agreement.

Speaking following the ministerial meeting, Mr Sharma said:

“Whilst we made progress and I am encouraged the G20 agreed to back a net zero future, and action in the critical decade of the 2020s, we need to turn words into action to keep the 1.5 degrees limit alive.

“It is frustrating that despite the progress made by some countries, there was no consensus in Naples to confine coal to history. But I remain hopeful about the prospect of countries taking up this issue at the G20 Leaders’ Summit in October.

“Countries on the front line of climate change have laid out a clear call to action and the G20 needs to respond to their moral authority and leadership, with ambitious climate action that keeps the 1.5 limit alive.

‘With just over three months to go until we come together in Glasgow, collaboration will be crucial. I look forward to welcoming ministers to London in the coming days so together we may chart our way towards a successful COP26 that delivers for both people and planet.’”