

Trade Secretary hails role of free trade in global security at transatlantic defence summit

- UK hosts fifth Atlantic Future Forum aboard HMS Queen Elizabeth in New York Harbour
- Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch will deliver a keynote speech and the Prime Minister has recorded the opening address
- Trade Secretary will promote transatlantic trade and investment, telling audience of US investors why the UK is the best place in the world to invest

The UK today [28 September] kicks off the fifth annual Atlantic Future Forum (AFF), bringing together British and American captains of industry aboard the UK's largest and most powerful warship, the HMS Queen Elizabeth.

The two-day event will focus on new approaches to global security and future technologies to tackle everything from the war in Ukraine to climate change, with UK businesses across the defence, cyber and tech industries able to network with potential investors.

Addressing over 450 government and business leaders, the Trade Secretary Kemi Badenoch will highlight the role of free trade in delivering global economic security and economic growth. She will say our two likeminded democracies must continue working together to defend the rules-based international order.

Trade Secretary Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP said:

"The US is our single most important trade, defence and security partner. We share the same values – freedom, free trade and the rule of law. Our special relationship means together we are a force for progress as we face down countries who threaten these values.

"The Atlantic Future Forum represents an incredible opportunity for our two nations to exchange skills, ideas and technology. Every morning, over a million people get up and go to work for British companies in America, and over a million do the same for American companies in the UK.

"The UK is a low-tax, high-talent, innovation nation and I will show America's biggest companies that we are ready to be their investment partner of choice."

The US has been the UK's largest single inward investment partner country for the last two decades. US businesses employed almost 1.5 million people in the UK in 2019, up three quarters since 1997. US investment is also supporting the UK's levelling up agenda with 60% of these jobs based outside of London and the South East.

Following her speech, Badenoch will use her two-day visit to New York to capitalise on growing investor interest in the UK by meeting New York-based investors to promote the UK as a defence, cyber and tech superpower and a source of unmatched talent. She will visit Mastercard's new "Experience Centre" at their "Tech Hub" in the Flatiron District of Manhattan and meet with some of the biggest US and UK companies at a British American Business roundtable to discuss investment opportunities that can help grow the UK economy.

Badenoch will speak to her counterpart in the Biden administration, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, to discuss how our two countries can further our already thriving trading relationship.

The Trade Secretary will also use her time in the US to highlight the opportunities being unlocked at the state level, following signature of recent Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Indiana and North Carolina. The MoUs are designed to cut red tape and remove barriers facing UK businesses exporting to the US.

The UK is working towards further MoUs with Oklahoma and South Carolina in the coming months and seeking to progress talks with other states this year.

Background:

- Now in its fifth year, the annual defence, security, trade and technology forum is convened by the UK Government with full funding from global industry partners.

We must all unequivocally reject Russian attempts to illegally annex Ukrainian territory: UK at the UN Security Council

Mr. President,

Russia's holding of sham referenda in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions of Ukraine is an egregious violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and of the principles of the UN Charter.

As the UN told us today, this process is both illegal and illegitimate.

It is a shameless propaganda effort aimed at justifying Russia's illegal presence on sovereign Ukrainian territory.

We have seen Russia's referendum playbook before in Crimea. We see it playing

out again now: disinformation, intimidation and fabrication.

As my Foreign Secretary told the Council last week, we know that President Putin is planning to rig the outcome.

These are regions that voted overwhelmingly to join an independent Ukraine in 1991 and to back President Zelenskyy in 2019.

When given a free vote, their choice has been clear: to be part of a free, independent, democratic Ukraine.

Since invading, Russia's control in these regions has been through violence, torture, filtration and forced deportation.

We've all seen images of soldiers with automatic rifles accompanying the ballots as they move from door to door, forcing Ukrainians to take part.

Any referenda held under these conditions, at the barrel of a gun, can never be remotely close to free or fair.

And the very idea that a referendum on a fundamental question could be held at three days' notice in the middle of a war zone is frankly farcical.

We must all unequivocally reject these illegitimate actions and Russian attempts to illegally annex Ukrainian territory. And support the draft resolution the US and Albania have brought forward today.

Colleagues, this is a critical moment. There is no middle ground. No member of the United Nations should turn a blind eye to Russia tearing up the principles of the UN Charter.

If we allow Russia to believe it can change sovereign borders by force, then the entire system on which we base our shared safety and security is under threat.

These Potemkin referenda, as well as Putin's decision to mobilise Russian men to fight in his illegal war, are admissions that his invasion is failing.

Instead of sending thousands more of his own citizens to their death and inflicting further destruction on Ukraine, he should end this senseless war today.

Thank you.

[Environment Agency crushes tipper](#)

truck in waste crime probe

Investigators believe the Ford tipper truck belonged to a group operating at various sites in the capital. Crime officers removed the vehicle from an address at Chesham in Buckinghamshire during a wider probe into organised waste crime.

The 18-year white van had been seen reportedly dumping waste on open land, in empty warehouses and other sites in Croydon, Merton, Mitcham and Southwark in the past year. Material left at the sites included construction waste, tyres and rubbish from house clearances.

Officers continue to investigate the vehicle's owners, who failed to come forward to claim it before it was destroyed.

Matt Higginson, an Environment Manager for the Environment Agency in the South East, said:

Where individuals threaten to undermine legitimate businesses and illegally dump waste, we have no hesitation in using all powers open to us.

Seizing vehicles involved in waste crime, based upon vital intelligence from the public, is an important weapon in our armoury to disrupt waste criminals and can make a real difference to local communities blighted by illegal dumping of waste.

To avoid unwittingly supporting waste criminals, and facing the possibility of an unlimited fine, we ask the public and businesses to always ask for proof of a waste carrier's registration and waste transfer note – and take photos of them – before having any waste cleared.

Crushing suspected offenders' vehicles is one of the tactics of Operation Angola, which investigates large-scale illegal dumping of commercial waste.

Whether a resident or a business, everyone should take responsibility for their own waste. Don't give rubbish to someone who can't prove they are a legitimate waste carrier – they may just dump it to avoid paying waste-disposal costs.

Anyone using a company or individual to take away their waste should always obtain a waste transfer note as proof. If in any doubt, call the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60, or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or use the online form at www.crimestoppers-uk.org.

The white 2004 Ford tipper truck was seized using powers under section 34B of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

The decision to crush the vehicle was taken as there was no value in selling the vehicle.

[United Kingdom promotes livelihoods and environmental protection in the Verapaces](#)

World news story

UK project will allow families in Senahú, Alta Verapaz, to improve their coffee and cardamom production while protecting the environment.



The British Ambassador, Nick Whittingham, attended the launch of the project “Indigenous bio cultural landscapes for livelihoods and connectivity in Verapaces”. It will be financed by the [Darwin Initiative](#) and the Fund of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) of the British Government.

The initiative will support the productive livelihoods of 10 Q’eqchís and Poqomchíes indigenous cooperatives, benefiting a total of 4,500 families in the municipality of Senahú Alta Verapaz that are associated with the Federation of Cooperatives of Las Verapaces, Limited Liability -FEDECOVERA, RL. – .

The project is carried out in the Sierra Yalijux of Alta Verapaz, an area of high biodiversity whose protection depends on private nature reserves and remnants of forest that are still within the territories of cooperatives and indigenous communities. The project goals are:

- Rescue and recognize the value of biodiversity through stories and ceremonies associated with good practices on the use and management of natural resources and indigenous knowledge about nature.
- Improve the income of 4,500 families through sustainable activities in

an equitable manner by ethnic group, generation and gender.

- Restore forest cover to create biological corridors between fragmented and disturbed forests.
- Reduce the carbon footprint in the production of coffee and cardamom by reducing the use of firewood, ecological processing and production in agroforestry systems.
- Support women, youth and indigenous communities in alternative livelihoods compatible with nature.

The project has a duration of three years starting September 2022, with financing of £560,000 (approximately 5 million quetzals) from the British government, and a counterpart contribution of £158,000, which makes a total of Q6,462,000 quetzals. It will be implemented by FEDECOVERA, R. L. and the National Association of Private Natural Reserves of Guatemala -ARNPG-, with the support of the University of Greenwich.

Senior authorities from the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources (MARN) and the National Council for Protected Areas (CONAP) also attended the launch, who are active partners in the project.

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[The fundamental building blocks for stability in Afghanistan: UK statement at UN Security Council](#)

Thank you President,

I join others in thanking Deputy Special Representative Potzel, Ghada Waly, Executive Director, and Ms Fawzia Koofi for their sobering briefings and also UNAMA and the Secretary-General for his quarterly report.

As we've heard, nearly 60% of the population of Afghanistan officially requires humanitarian assistance, but the true need is much higher.

The World Bank predicts GDP will have contracted by one third by the end of this year, and the Taliban continues increased restrictions on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

I cannot speak more eloquently than Fawzia Koofi did about the restrictions on freedom of movement that women and girls face – the political, economic, educational and social exclusion that they face.

UNICEF estimates the ban on schooling for girls has cost the Afghan economy

at least \$500 million during the last year. But the human cost for each of these Afghan girls is immeasurable.

President,

Some Council Members appear determined to politicise the crisis in Afghanistan, and I think their assertions are neither accurate nor helpful.

The UK disbursed \$306 million in humanitarian and development assistance for Afghanistan last financial year, and we have committed a further \$306 million this financial year.

We are the second largest donor to the World Bank's Afghanistan Reconstruction Fund, and we continue to work with the World Bank, IMF and others on economic stabilisation.

We recognise the importance of restoring liquidity to the banking system, including a functioning Central Bank able to access Afghanistan's overseas reserves. But this requires an independent Central Bank operating transparently with professional leadership and proper controls in place to prevent funds being diverted to terrorism.

Calling for reserves simply to be returned before these essential steps are in place is neither responsible nor compatible with a genuine commitment to stopping terrorist financing.

President,

Humanitarian and financial support can help, but it will not resolve Afghanistan's problems unless the fundamental building blocks for stability are put in place. To do this, the Taliban must uphold, rather than repress human rights, allow unhindered humanitarian access, meet counter-terrorism commitments made in the Doha Agreement, and they must take responsibility for stabilizing the economy.

This means creating an enabling environment for greater investment, including ensuring transparency on revenue and budget, and enabling women – half of the population – to contribute to economic activity.

Finally President,

I take the opportunity to welcome the appointment of Special Representative Otunbayeva. It is vital for Afghanistan's future that the Taliban cooperate with her and the UN, and we urge all members of the Council to support her as she implements UNAMA's critical mandate.

Thank you.