

Foreign Secretary travels to USA

- Foreign Secretary Liz Truss to visit the US for talks to deepen our diplomatic, intelligence and security ties as we stand together against Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine.
- In the face of Russian aggression, Britain is working side-by-side with the United States to ensure Putin will fail.
- She will meet Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to coordinate further support for Ukraine and crippling economic consequences for Russia.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss begins an intensive round of diplomatic talks in the US tomorrow (Wednesday 9 March) as countries around the world continue to hold the Putin regime to account for its invasion of Ukraine.

In Washington DC, she will meet Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan to discuss what more the UK and US can do to support Ukraine on security, intelligence, and humanitarian issues.

Liz Truss will raise the importance of a stronger deterrence against hostile states, and the need to reduce strategic economic reliance on authoritarian regimes, including energy dependency on Russia.

She will also emphasise the need for both the US and UK to build closer economic and security ties with like-minded countries who believe in democracy and the sovereignty of nations.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

The UK, US and our allies have shown remarkable strength and unity in supporting Ukraine and imposing severe sanctions on Russia. We need to maintain that unity and do more to ensure Putin fails in Ukraine.

The Ukraine crisis is a wake-up call for free democracies. I am in the US to talk about what more we can do to deter hostile state actors, reduce strategic dependency on Russian energy – and authoritarian states more broadly – and build stronger economic and security alliances around the world.

During her visit, the Foreign Secretary will also hold a series of talks with Members of Congress to discuss deepening UK-US ties and she will deliver a keynote speech at the Atlantic Council.

The Foreign Secretary's visit to the US follows an intensive week of diplomacy in Europe. She spoke at the Human Rights Council in Geneva, met Baltic allies in Lithuania and in Brussels attended the EU Foreign Affairs Council, met NATO allies and held talks with G7 counterparts. In all her meetings she has sought to bring together fellow believers in freedom and

democracy to isolate Russia and stand against its aggression.

In addition, the Foreign Secretary announced last week additional UK sanctions against Russian oligarchs, as part of a tough package against Russia, which also includes sanctioning the Russian Central Bank, and banning the Russian State and all Russian companies from raising funds in the UK. In coordination with the US and other allies, these measures amount to the largest set of financial sanctions in history. The Foreign Secretary will use her visit to further coordinate with the US on what more the international community can do through sanctions to cripple the Russian economy.

In terms of humanitarian efforts, the UK has pledged £394 million in aid to help Ukraine – £220 million in humanitarian aid; £100 million on the energy sector and reform; £74 million fiscal support. The UK is matching pound for pound the public's first £25 million for the DEC Ukraine Humanitarian Appeal – the UK's largest ever aid-match contribution. UK humanitarian experts have deployed to neighbouring countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Moldova).

[The value of women's economic inclusion for maintaining peace](#)

Thank you, Madam President, and welcome to the Council.

Thank you for chairing this debate. Our briefers and speakers so far have eloquently highlighted the importance and the value of women's economic inclusion for maintaining peace, and stabilising peace in post-conflict settings.

And, this debate is timely as we grapple with the challenge of recovering globally from the Covid-19 pandemic, whose economic impacts fell disproportionately on women and girls -- and risk, without effective intervention, having a long-term effect.

Madam President, our theme today is partnerships – may I highlight three?

First, as Ms Coulibaly highlighted, the critical role of funding:

The UK government is committed to working with partner governments, multilaterals and the private sector to support women in fragile economies to play an equal role in the economy, to access the benefits of trade globally, and to establish economic partnerships as levers for equality.

For example, in Jordan, where women face the compound effects of conflict, displacement, and the impacts of COVID-19, the UK development programmes provide cash transfers to refugees and to at-risk Jordanian women.

More generally, the UK and our G7 partners are leading the way in mobilising public and private investments to advance gender equality and address persistent gaps in women's economic opportunities, such as access to digital and financial assets.

Through the 2X Financing for Women Challenge, launched during the UK's G7 Presidency last year, British Investment International and our partners committed to investing over \$15 billion over the 2021-22 period, to advance this agenda in developing countries.

And, this work includes supporting flexible working practices, access to leadership opportunities, financing, and affordable products and services. But in a context where only 25% of women in fragile states have bank accounts, we also need to consider innovative interventions like microcredit loans.

Second, with partners, we're partnering to promote policies designed to promote women's inclusion and full and meaningful economic participation. We particularly welcome the theme of Gender and Climate at this year's CSW, which is an opportunity to highlight the role women can play in advancing the climate change agenda after COP in Glasgow and ahead of COP in Egypt. In addition, the UK has committed, with G7 partners, to new targets to get 40 million more girls in school, and 20 million more girls reading by 2026.

Overall, our vision is that all girls should get 12 years of quality education.

Thirdly, we seek to strengthen partnerships here in the UN and here in the Security Council in support of women's economic, social and political inclusion – drawing on the experiences that we have heard about. And, I join others in highlighting the particular reversals that women of Afghanistan have suffered since August.

As we discuss the renewal of the UNAMA Mandate, we will prioritise returning Afghan women to their full meaningful inclusion in Afghanistan's economy and society.

Madam President,

The UK welcomes today's debate, which has underlined why economic inclusion should be an integral part of a holistic approach to women, peace and security.

But, I cannot finish without stating the obvious. Economic inclusion is no protection against bullets and bombs. This has been made horribly clear over the last 13 days. And just yesterday, we witnessed Russian shelling kill a Ukrainian mother and her two children as they sought to evacuate the city of Irpin.

They were not the first casualties – tragically, they will not be the last. Men, women, children – Russian as well as Ukrainian – will continue to suffer until Russia ends this brutal and unprovoked war.

Thank you for convening today's debate.

Minister Milling speech at the CEPI Global Pandemic Preparedness Summit 2022

Good afternoon everyone once again. And I would like to start by thanking everyone for taking part in this global pandemic preparedness summit. It has been fantastic for the UK to welcome so many people both in person and online and to take part in such a rich discussion and to show our collective support for CEPI's pioneering work.

But while we gather here in London on the critical agenda of pandemic preparedness, I know that many of us will also be thinking about the horrors being committed by President Putin on the peaceful people of Ukraine. And I'm sure you will want to join me confirming that our thoughts and prayers are with Ukraine today as we condemn this unjustified war. I am proud the UK is providing critical medical supplies as part of our wider humanitarian support. Six flights have departed so far with over 500,000 items. So we remember Ukraine.

But through this summit, we also show that responsible countries and partners are still coming together to build a better, safer world. We are not deflected from that critical mission. The commitments made today in support of CEPI show our determination to learn the lessons from Covid and to build our collective health defences.

Together, we put our money where our mouth is, and raised a total of over 1.5 billion US dollars towards CEPI's fundraising goal.

And many industry partners have made their own commitments today to deliver real progress towards making the 100 days mission a reality with a joint statement of intent now published and signed between the UK government, CEPI and industry.

This is not just an investment in CEPI and their ground-breaking research. It's an investment in global resilience against disease

An investment in a healthier future in which the 100 days mission is a reality.

CEPI has more than proven its worth in the global response to COVID-19.

Their investment in 14 vaccine partnerships, which made up one of the world's largest vaccine portfolios, helped give world's scientists – including our

researchers in Oxford – a head-start in their race to save lives. Every deal that CEPI has struck has had equitable access to vaccines at its heart.

And they have shown steadfast leadership on making vaccines available across the world in this pandemic, through their work to launch the ACT-Accelerator and the COVAX facility.

And we have also heard today about CEPI's work on boosting vaccine manufacturing to give all regions the ownership they need on this agenda.

Today, on International Women's Day, we have also heard how pandemics have a disproportionate impact on women and girls, who often carry the burden of being primary carers or frontline health workers and are often at high risk of infection or complications, particularly pregnant and nursing women.

CEPI, with their commitment to vaccine equity is a key part of the solution for women, girls, and other marginalised groups and vulnerable populations. And women have been at the forefront of vaccine development, as brilliant scientists who've stepped-up over the past two years and saved millions of lives. In the face of devastating impacts of COVID-19, this has been science's finest hour.

And I'd particularly like to recognise: Professor Dame Sarah Gilbert, and her work to create the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine; Dr Nita Patel – who led the development of Novavax; And Dr Katalin Karikó, who paved the way for the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

However, we also know that COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic we face.

Future pandemics could pose an even more severe threat, so we have to stay vigilant and, as an international community, prepare to respond to the unknown Disease X, whatever it is and wherever it emerges in the world.

Today has shown why CEPI's target to have safe vaccines ready within 100 days for a future outbreak and to develop vaccines for their priority pathogens is so important.

The UK championed the 100 days mission under our G7 Presidency and we have committed £160 million towards the total raised today as a critical down payment against CEPI's plan to make 100 days mission a reality.

And the UK is proud to continue our steadfast collaboration with CEPI, through their newly announced partnership with the University of Cambridge's DioSynVax. This partnership will develop vaccines that are broadly protective against a range of beta coronaviruses including potential new variants.

Achieving this will require the best of the public and private sectors working together earlier and on a global scale and CEPI is a key partner when it comes to realising this goal.

That is why the UK could not be prouder to host this summit, or be pleased that this summit has raised over 1.5 billion dollars today for CEPI. This is a fantastic start toward CEPI's 5 year strategy and I look forward to more of

our international partners coming forward to support CEPI's mission, and to pledge funds in the coming weeks following this summit for this vital work.

Together, we are not just turning the tide against COVID-19, but we are ensuring the world comes out of this pandemic stronger and safer for the future.

Thank you for making that possible.

Gambling Reform Rally speech

Good afternoon and thank you for that introduction and inviting me here to speak.

As we discuss the very serious issues which are the topic of today's conference, I know that everyone will want to keep in mind the terrible atrocities being committed in Ukraine by the Putin regime as we speak. I am sure everyone here will want to express support for the Ukrainian people in this dark hour for their nation, and also support western Governments, including our own, in sending aid, imposing ever-increasing economic sanctions against the Putin regime and supplying substantial quantities of weapons to enable the Ukrainian Government and their brave armed forces and volunteers to defend their people and their land from this unprovoked invasion.

Let me turn now to the topic of gambling, and gambling harm. I want to start by recognising the hard and often very difficult work which many of you in this room have done over recent months and years to campaign for change in the gambling sector. In particular, I want to thank and pay tribute to those of you with lived experience of severe gambling harms and the families of those who have lost their lives for your bravery in speaking out and sharing your experiences. I have been able to meet many of you and hear your stories since I took over as the Minister with responsibility for gambling in September, and I know many of you will have made submissions to our Call for Evidence last year or met with officials too. The voice of those with lived experience and the families of those who have suffered or died is being heard.

Reform is undoubtedly long overdue. We're working on a white paper which will set out a revised policy in this area, and it is due to be published very soon.

As you will appreciate, I cannot pre-announce the policies in our White Paper which we are in the process of finalising. But what I can say is that we know that the gambling landscape does need reform – significant reforms – as it is now significantly different from the last time our gambling laws were comprehensively reviewed some 17 years ago. Internet gambling didn't really

exist in 2005. We now have evidence, including a Public Health England report, which identified 409 gambling suicides a year. It is imperative that we respond to that. Change is certainly needed.

We've heard too many cases of operators failing to meet their duties to protect people. Just last week, the Gambling Commission levied a huge fine against an online gambling company for breaches of their responsibilities to prevent harmful gambling and investigate their customers' source of funds. In that particular case, the gambling firm was fined £9.4 million by the Gambling Commission because they allowed an NHS worker who was only earning £1,400 a month to set a deposit cap at £1,300 a month. That's over 90% of their monthly income. In addition to that, they allowed another customer to lose £37,000 in an extremely short period of time with no checks whatsoever.

That is simply not right, and it shouldn't take the Gambling Commission acting after the event to catch them. It shouldn't happen in the first place.

In a separate case just a few weeks ago, a man was jailed for stealing hundreds of thousands of pounds from his employer to fund obviously unaffordable gambling losses. There has even been a case of someone stealing the staggering sum of £15 million from clients to fund a gambling addiction – without being stopped. There is no way anyone should be taking £15 million in gambling losses without asking questions, which clearly didn't happen in this case.

And of course I saw the Coroner's conclusions last week from the inquest into the tragic death of Jack Ritchie, whose parents Charles and Liz I have met and are here today.

This begs the question of what things can we do differently to stop this happening. One of the things I've spoken about previously is the role that technology and data can play in preventing harm from arising, because the big gambling companies have enormous troves of data which they use very effectively for the purposes of cross-selling, and encouraging people to gamble more. So I think we need to use that data to help protect the public, which means having a regulator that has the powers and capability to get hold of that data and properly analyse it, to understand where bad practices are happening and ensure compliance. There is a new Chair and Chief Executive of the Gambling Commission who were appointed in the middle of last year, who we are working closely with, to try and figure out these changes.

Separate to the review, the Gambling Commission is going to publish shortly its enhanced requirements for customer interaction, so making sure gambling operators are doing proper checks, and we're going to address that in our review as well, to make sure the right protections are in place, to stop this kind of thing happening in the future, because there is a lot we must do through the Gambling Review to combat the risk of people falling into addiction.

There's a couple of areas data can be used to accomplish that.

One is the Single Customer View, which is where there is a process of data

sharing, and secondly, affordability checks. We're clear that we're not going to rely on self-regulation. The Government and Gambling Commission have a range of powers to make sure our objectives for the sector can be properly delivered, and that operators behave in the right way – which some do, but a number of others do not.

It goes without saying that any data shared as part of the Single Customer View, or gathered to check on a customer's financial circumstances, should only be used for the purposes of harm prevention. Under no circumstances should it be used for commercial purposes. But it's also important to make sure that this work is proportionate. It wouldn't be appropriate or proportionate to have intrusive checks for someone who is betting relatively small amounts of money on the Grand National. But there are definitely levels of more significant gambling losses where proper checks should be done. That is the kind of intervention we're looking at, in a way that is proportionate and balanced. Obviously there are legitimate customer concerns about privacy that need to be balanced with the imperative to prevent harm. We're going to make sure that balance is struck in a reasonable way.

Everyone is at risk of developing a gambling addiction, but many people are able to gamble reasonably. We're a free country, and people should be allowed to do that. What we can't have is people being led down a path to a very dark place. Too much of that is happening at the moment. Prevention is a lot better than cure, which is why we do see this as a public health issue and why we do have, and should have, controls that protect everyone who chooses to gamble – through the licensing regime to regulation to technical standards. Some of this is being done already. For example, a couple of years ago, a ban on gambling using credit cards was introduced, and some important work on self-exclusion, but more work needs to be done in these areas.

We also need to do more work on treatment. There are two gambling clinics in the UK – one in London and one in Leeds. There are three more clinics opening shortly – in Stoke, Southampton and a satellite service in Telford. There is a Government commitment, funded by the NHS, to get 15 gambling clinics opened over the next couple of years, which is an important part of the treatment programme as well.

I hope you've gathered from my comments and the case studies that I'm very powerfully seized by that I recognise the need to do more to protect people. 409 suicides a year just isn't acceptable. People are being exposed to risks in an unreasonable way, led down what can be a very dark path. So we are going to act, and act quickly. We'll do it in a way that is balanced and proportionate, that is led by the evidence. But we're going to act, and act quickly. It's because of the campaigning by many people in this room that we'll do that.

Thank you again for the invitation today, and campaigning in what must often be very difficult and tragic circumstances. Change is needed, and change is coming.

PM meeting with Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala: 8 March 2022

Press release

The Prime Minister spoke to Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala at Lancaster House today as part of the V4 summit.



The Prime Minister spoke to Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala at Lancaster House today as part of the V4 summit.

The Prime Minister said the UK and the Czech Republic shared not a just deep bilateral relationship, but also a common approach to tackling global issues.

The leaders agreed that Russia's invasion in Ukraine was unacceptable, barbaric and devastating to the Ukrainian and Russian people.

Both leaders agreed on the need for the West to wean itself off Russian oil and gas, and said they would work with allies across Europe to ensure Russia could no longer control energy supplies.

The two nations agreed to further cooperation on cyber resilience, and to continue to strengthen the close ties between the UK and Czech Republic.

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