

US policy set out in London

I attended the lecture by the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, yesterday at Lancaster House. Arranged by the Centre for Policy Studies, it was a good event reminding us of the closeness of the Atlantic alliance as seen by a senior member of the current Administration.

The Secretary of State repeated the US offer of an early free trade agreement just as soon as the UK is an independent country again able to negotiate and sign one. He stressed the important contribution the UK makes to the 5 country intelligence grouping that underpins our security and US security. He praised the UK for its support in promoting democracy and better government worldwide, and for the substantial humanitarian aid supplied to trouble spots.

He called for us to support the US view that Germany is undermining western security by undertaking the second gas pipeline from Russia, making the EU far too dependent on Russian energy. He thought the UK could do more to ensure its own energy self sufficiency as the USA has now done through its shale gas revolution. He reminded us of the tough diplomatic response the US made to the Salisbury poisonings. He also warned the UK of the dangers of using a Chinese company which also acts for the Chinese state in 5G networks, suggesting that it will limit US ability and willingness to share with us if they feel the Chinese have access to secret data and messages between allies.

His visit was a preparatory visit for the President's on the occasion of the NATO Summit. He told us how the new US Ambassador who arrived in London in 1941 at the nadir of our fortunes in that war opted to live in a modest flat and to live under the rule of the UK ration book to share the dangers and deprivations faced by Londoners fighting for our freedoms. It was a moving address from an important ally. It was also good to hear from a country that has the full range of powers for self government, and a country willing to use them for what it sees as its national good and for the wider causes of freedom and democracy worldwide.