Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

This week at the Foreign Office

2011-11-25

This week the Foreign Secretary spoke about “relentlessly pursuing” the UK’s commitment to elevate the importance of economic and commercial diplomacy within British foreign policy when he spoke at the

Confederation of British Industry’s annual conference

.

In a

speech to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly

the Foreign Secretary said: “We must make sure that Afghanistan is strong enough to protect its own national security, and through that, our own.” The Foreign Secretary also updated Parliament on

progress in Afghanistan during the month of October

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The

Foreign Secretary met Syrian opposition groups on Monday

. Speaking after the meeting he said it is important for opposition groups to be able to put aside their own differences and come to a united view of the way forward for Syria.

On Tuesday the Foreign Secretary welcomed the passage of a UK drafted human rights resolution on the

repression in Syria

. This followed UN agreement of resolutions on

Iran, North Korea and Burma

.

He also called for Egyptian authorities to respect the right of peaceful protest and immediately cease the use of violence against protestors after “unacceptable violence and loss of life took place around

Tahrir Square in Cairo

. Our travel advice for British nationals in Egypt is being

regularly reviewed and updated

.

Today he welcomed the Moroccan elections, describing them as important in order to

progress towards greater democratic accountability

.

Turkish President Gul visited the UK this week on a State Visit. Ahead of the visit the Foreign Secretary wrote about the “

new special relationship

”.

Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos visited the UK this week. The visit showed the step change the UK wants to see in its

relationship with the wider Latin America region

.

Minister for Europe David Lidington described the sentencing of human rights defender Ales Bialiatski as another case of the Belarusian judicial system being used to punish those in Belarus

who defend basic human rights

.

The Overseas Territories Consultative Council took place in London this week. The Foreign Secretary & Minister for the Overseas Territories Henry Bellingham reiterated their commitment to

increased engagement with British Overseas Territories

.

Thirty-two years after the fall of the Khmer Rouge, the trial of its three most senior surviving leaders heard opening statements on 21 November. Foreign Office Minister welcomed the start of the trial which he said represents an important step towards justice and

national reconciliation for the people of Cambodia

.

Today is

UN International day for Elimination of Violence against Women

. The Government's International Ministerial champion Lynne Featherstone has spoken about the UK Government's action to prevent violence against women and support to victims.

The Foreign Office launched two films of the See Britain in my eyes series. In the first,

British born Palestinian singer Shadia Mansour

talked about creative freedom in Britain and what it means to her to be able to choose her own path. In the second,

Pakistan born academic Mona Siddiqui

talks about her experiences living in Britain and discusses the many opportunities available.

Next week the UN Climate Summit will start in Durban, South Africa. You can keep up to date with our

news on the summit via Storify

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Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/news/this-week-at-the-foreign-office--62