Foreign & Commonwealth Office (UK)

PM statement on National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015

2015-11-23

Introduction

With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review.

Mr Speaker, our national security depends on our economic security, and vice versa.

So the first step in keeping our country safe is to ensure our economy is, and remains, strong.

Over the last 5 years we have taken the difficult decisions needed to bring down our deficit and restore our economy to strength.

In 2010, we were ordering equipment for which there was literally no money.

The total black hole in the defence budget alone was bigger than the entire defence budget in that year.

Now it is back in balance.

By sticking to our long-term economic plan, Britain has become the fastest growing major advanced economy in the world for the last 2 years.

And our renewed economic security means that today we can show how we can afford to invest further in our national security.

Growing threats to our security

Mr Speaker, this is vital at a time when the threats to our country are growing.

This morning I was in Paris with President Hollande discussing how we can work together to defeat the evil of ISIL.

As the murders on the streets of Paris reminded us so starkly, ISIL is not some remote problem thousands of miles away.

It is a direct threat to our security at home and abroad.

It has already taken the lives of British hostages…

…and carried out the worst terrorist attack against British people since 7/7 on the beaches of Tunisia…

…to say nothing of the 7 terrorist plots right here in Britain that have been foiled by our security services over the past year.

And of course, Mr Speaker, the threats we face today go beyond this evil death cult.

From the crisis in Ukraine…

…to the risks of cyber-attacks and pandemics…

…the world is more dangerous and uncertain today than even 5 years ago.

So while every government must choose how to spend the money it has available…

…every penny of which is hard-earned by taxpayers…

…this government has taken a clear decision to invest in our security and safeguard our prosperity.

As a result, the United Kingdom is the only major country in the world today which is simultaneously going to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of our GDP on defence…

…and the UN target of spending 0.7% of our GNI on development…

…while also increasing investment in our security and intelligence agencies and in counter-terrorism.

Mr Speaker, in ensuring our national security, we will also protect our economic security.

As a trading nation with the world's fifth biggest economy, we depend on stability and order in the world.

With 5 million British nationals living overseas, our prosperity depending on trade around the world, so engagement is not an optional extra, it is fundamental to the success of our nation.

We need the sea lanes to stay open and the arteries of global commerce to remain free flowing.

So the strategy which I am presenting to the House today sets out a clear vision for a secure and prosperous United Kingdom, with global reach and global influence.

At its heart is an understanding that we cannot choose between conventional defences against state-based threats on the one hand…

…and the need to counter threats that do not recognise national borders.

Today we face both and we must respond to both types of threat.

So over the course of this Parliament our priorities are to deter state-based threats…

…to tackle terrorism…

…to remain a world leader in cyber security…

…and ensure we have the capability to respond rapidly to crises as they emerge.

And to meet these priorities we will continue to harness all the tools of national power available to us, coordinated through the National Security Council, to deliver a ‘full-spectrum approach’.

This includes support for our Armed Forces…

…counter-terrorism…

…international aid and diplomacy…

…and working with our allies to deal with the common threats that face us all.

Let me take each in turn.

Armed forces

First, the bottom line of our National Security Strategy must always be the willingness and capability to use force where necessary.

On Friday evening the United Nations Security Council unanimously agreed Resolution 2249…

…calling on Member States to take “all the necessary measures” against ISIL in both Syria and Iraq.

Mr Speaker, on Thursday I will come to this House and make a further statement responding personally to the Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

I’ll make the case for Britain to join our international allies in going after ISIL at their headquarters in Syria, not just Iraq.

And I will explain how such action would be one element of a comprehensive and long-term strategy to defeat ISIL, in parallel with a major international effort to bring an end to the war in Syria.

But today I want to set out how we will ensure that our Armed Forces have the capabilities to carry out such a task…

…and indeed any other tasks that might be needed in the years ahead.

We will invest more than £178 billion in buying and maintaining equipment over the next decade…

…including doubling our investment in equipment to support our Special Forces.

And we will also increase the size of our deployable Armed Forces.

In 2010 we committed to an expeditionary force of 30,000.

Today I can tell the House that by 2025 we are increasing that number to 50,000.

And as part of this, we will create two new strike brigades, forces of up to 5,000 personnel fully equipped to deploy rapidly and sustain themselves in the field.

We will establish two additional Typhoon squadrons and an additional squadron of F35 Lightning combat aircraft to operate from our new aircraft carriers.

We will maintain our ultimate insurance policy as a nation – our Continuous At Sea Nuclear Deterrent – and replace our four ballistic missile submarines.

We will buy 9 new Maritime Patrol Aircraft, to be based in Scotland at RAF Lossiemouth. They will protect our nuclear deterrent, they will hunt down hostile submarines and they will enhance our maritime search and rescue.

And we will buy at least 13 new frigates and 2 new offshore patrol vessels.

These will include eight Type 26 anti-submarine warfare frigates.

We will design and build a new class of light, flexible general purpose frigates as well.

These will be more affordable than the Type 26, which will allow us to buy more of them for the Royal Navy…

…so that by the 2030s we can further increase the total number of Royal Navy frigates and destroyers.

Mr Speaker, not one of these capabilities is an optional extra.

These investments are an act of clear-eyed self-interest to ensure our future prosperity and security.

Counter-terrorism

Second, turning to counter-terrorism, we will make a major additional investment in our world class intelligence agencies…

…to ensure they have the resources and information they need to detect and foil plots from wherever they emanate in the world.

So as I announced last week, we will invest £2.5 billion…

…and employ over 1,900 additional staff.

We will increase our investment in counter-terrorism police and more than double our spending on aviation security around the world.

And I can tell the House today that we have put in place a significant new contingency plan to deal with major terrorist attacks

Under this new operation, up to 10,000 military personnel will be available to support the police in dealing with the type of shocking terrorist attacks we have seen in Paris.

We will also make a major new investment in a new generation of surveillance drones.

These British-designed unmanned aircraft will fly at the very edge of the earth's atmosphere and allow us to observe our adversaries for weeks on end…

…providing critical intelligence for our forces.

Mr Speaker, we will also do more to make sure the powers we give our security services keep pace with modern technology.

So we will see through the draft Bill we have published to ensure GCHQ, MI5 and our counter-terrorism police continue to have the powers they need.

Aid

Third, we will use our formidable development budget and our outstanding Diplomatic Service to tackle global poverty, promote our interests, project our influence…

…and address the causes of the security threats we face, not just their consequences.

So alongside the Strategic Defence Review, I am also publishing our Strategy for Official Development Assistance.

At its heart is a decision to refocus half of DFID's budget on supporting fragile and broken states and regions in every year of this Parliament.

This will help to prevent conflict – and, crucially, it will help to promote the golden thread of conditions that drive prosperity all across the world: the rule of law, good governance and the growth of democracy.

The Conflict, Stability and Security Fund will grow to over £1.3 billion a year by the end of this Parliament…

…and we will also create a new £1.3 billion Prosperity Fund - to drive forward our aim of promoting global prosperity and good governance.

Building on our success in tackling Ebola, we will do more to improve our resilience and our response to crises…

…identifying £500 million a year as a crisis reserve…

…and investing £1.5 billion over the Parliament in a Global Challenges Research Fund for UK Science to pioneer new ways of tackling global problems like anti-microbial resistance.

We will also invest £1 billion in a new fund for the research and development of products to fight infectious diseases, known as the Ross Fund…

…and £5.8 billion in climate finance to play our part in helping poorer countries switch to greener forms of energy.

Mr Speaker, taken together these interventions are not just right morally - they are firmly in our national interest.

They mean that Britain not only meets its obligations to the poorest in the world, but can now focus our resources on…

…preventing or dealing with the instability and conflict which impinge on our security at home…

…investing at scale to create the economic opportunities that lead to long-term stability across the world…

…and responding rapidly and decisively to emerging crises overseas.

Acting on all of these fronts gives us greater influence in the world.

Alliances

Finally, Britain’s safety and security depends not just on our own efforts, but on working hand in glove with our allies…

…to deal with the common threats that face us all, from terrorism to climate change.

When confronted by danger, we are stronger together.

So we will play our full part in the alliances which underpin our security and amplify our national power.

And we will work with our allies in Europe and around the world…

…as well as seizing opportunities to reach out to emerging powers.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, history teaches us that no government can predict the future.

We have no way of knowing precisely what course events will take over the next 5 years: we must expect the unexpected.

But we can make sure that we have the versatility and the means to respond to new risks and threats to our security as they arise.

Mr Speaker, our armed forces, police and security and intelligence services are the pride of our country.

They are the finest in the world…

…and this government will ensure they stay that way.

Using our renewed economic strength, we will help them to keep us safe for generations to come.

And I commend this Statement to the House.

Source: https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/pm-statement-on-national-security-strategy-and-strategic-defence-and-security-review-2015