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The 'network of liberty': slogan or strategy?

The logo for the New Diplomacy Project is located in the top right corner. It consists of a dark red square containing the text 'NEW DIPLOMACY PROJECT' in white, uppercase letters. The word 'DIPLOMACY' is larger and features a small globe icon in place of the letter 'O'.

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TOP LINES

- This paper will cover multiple policy areas relevant to the 'network of liberty', a concept espoused by the Foreign Secretary across several speeches. The paper will explore the current gaps and contradictions in Government policy which hamper the ability of the UK to champion democracy and human rights, and will offer specific policy recommendations that will strengthen Labour's ability to offer a robust alternative.
- The 'network of liberty' is at present little more than a slogan. However, it is important to scrutinise and challenge this concept as it highlights multiple inconsistencies in the Government's international policy.
- The growing assertiveness of authoritarian actors means the UK has a key role to play in promoting democracy and human rights globally. It is vital that this is done through concrete action, not merely by speechifying about democratic values.
- The ongoing Ukraine crisis has demonstrated that there is in fact a 'network of liberty', reflected in the coordinated response of democracies against Russia. However, the Government's half-hearted approach to taking in Ukrainian refugees and the influence of Russian finance in the City of London both risk undermining the UK's influence as a leading human rights and pro-democracy actor. While the Foreign Secretary has talked about liberty, the Government is yet to match rhetoric with action.
- Labour's response should focus on the narrowness of the network of liberty concept as largely market-focused, individualist and transactional. It should also use the slogan to highlight the Government's rhetoric-heavy but strategy-light approach to foreign policy.
- However, Labour should support the premise at its most basic, to the extent that the UK has a leading role to play in promoting democracy, human rights, equality, and good governance globally. The idea of a 'network of liberty' can be given substance in the following ways.

International development

- Many democratic states and groups have launched their own 'Counter Belt and Road' projects in recent months. Labour should push the Government to explain how UK projects such as British International Investment and the 'Clean Green Initiative' will work in relation to the G7's Build Back Better World and the EU's Global Gateway.
- While the Government has attempted to rebrand its international finance and development efforts, the reality is that punishing aid cuts have impacted the UK's credibility in regions such as East Africa.

International trade

- Labour should outline a clear policy position on what its approach would be to negotiating entry to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), continuing to set clear red lines on critical national industries and outlining its approach to championing high labour and environmental standards within the CPTPP.

Defence and security

- Labour should ensure any expansion of AUKUS is not done so without meaningful consultation with regional actors such as Japan and Taiwan, as the most immediate stakeholders of any increased military tension with China. While including countries such as Taiwan and Japan in the nuclear submarine programme would be dangerously provocative, including them in the technology-sharing aspects of AUKUS would be worthwhile, and a gesture of partnership in the region.

Relations with Europe

- Labour should commit to the restoration of positive UK-EU relations as a cornerstone of its future foreign policy, outlining specific areas of cooperation. This should be done both bilaterally with member states and with the European Union as a whole. Areas of clear mutual interest such as regional security, cross-border policing, condemning human rights abuses through fora like the UN, and sanctions are clear means of cooperation.

BACKGROUND

In a speech at Chatham House in December 2021, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss set out how the UK is "building a network of liberty" around the world. On 21 January 2022, Truss made a 'follow-up speech' to the Lowy Institute in Sydney, Australia, which made much more explicit reference to the growing antagonism of China and Russia. These speeches provided some insight into the Foreign Secretary's view of foreign policy – a view that is highly neoliberal and commercially-driven – and highlighted many gaps, inconsistencies, and contradictions within the Government's international policy more broadly.

In the speech, Truss said that democracies had fallen into complacency in the post-Cold War years, a complacency which is "being exploited by those who never stopped fighting the global battle of ideas. They've been relentlessly building their influence – offering a quick buck to anyone who would take it, with strings attached for sovereignty and national security." In the 21 January 2022 speech to the Lowy Institute in Sydney, Truss made further mention of the

network of liberty, saying that “freedom-loving democracies” must rise up to face down threats from China and Russia.¹

Truss said that it is “time to wake up”, that “when people have agency over their own lives, when they have freedom and opportunity, they achieve incredible things.”² The speech outlined the key areas through which Truss intends to build this network of liberty. She invoked Britain’s strength in business, science and technology, and culture as means of championing democracy and human rights. The core thesis of the speech was the equating of democracy and freedom with capitalist economies.

The network of liberty at present is little more than a slogan. However, it is important to scrutinise and challenge it as a concept for several reasons:

- It raises serious questions about many international policy decisions taken by the Government in 2021, in areas including aid, Europe and the Indo-Pacific region. Key examples include the reduction of ODA spend targets and the snubbing of France.
- The Government’s apparent aim for the UK to be a ‘force for good’ by “defending openness, democracy and human rights” is laid out in the Integrated Review.³ This means that many of the Government’s efforts which contradict Truss’s network of liberty also contradict a foundational document of the Conservative Government’s foreign policy.
- Whether the network of liberty is a slogan or not, the efforts of authoritarian states to erode global democracy are very real. Russia’s current movements toward Ukraine are self-explanatory, while China’s efforts to ‘export authoritarianism’ are well-documented.⁴ It is essential that democracies formulate a clear and unified response to these actions. Labour must engage with the concept at its most basic despite its shortcomings and lack of substance, in order to articulate a clear policy for addressing the growing assertiveness of authoritarian powers.

LABOUR’S RESPONSE

Labour’s response should focus on the narrowness of the network of liberty concept as largely market-focused, individualist and transactional. It should also use the slogan to highlight the Government’s rhetoric-heavy but strategy-light approach to foreign policy, and demonstrate that many of the Government’s actions in recent years - including its hamstringing of UK aid and bellicosity toward Europe - have seriously hampered the UK’s ability to convene democratic powers toward a shared purpose.

However, Labour should support the premise at its most basic, to the extent that the UK has a leading role to play in promoting democracy, human rights, equality, and good governance globally. It should call for greater resourcing of major UK assets in this space, including its world-leading education system, its expertise in democratic [strengthening programmes](#), leading roles in multilateral institutions, and world leadership in [soft power](#). In thematic and regional policy, Labour should call for measures to restore UK leadership in international development, ensure the diplomatic service remains well-resourced, emphasise the need for

¹ Gov.uk, [Foreign Secretary’s speech to the Lowy Institute](#), 21 January 2022

² Gov.uk, [Building the network of liberty: Foreign Secretary’s speech](#), 8 December 2021

³ HM Government, [Global Britain in a Competitive Age: the Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy](#), March 2021, p 14

⁴ Foreign Affairs, [How China Exports Authoritarianism](#), 16 September 2021

an inclusive and partnerships-based approach to growing trade and security engagement in the Indo-Pacific, and reassert the need for good-neighbourliness in Europe, as the UK's nearest neighbour which almost entirely comprises democracies.

The remainder of this briefing paper will detail the policies which must be strengthened in order for the UK to act as an effective champion of human rights, democracy, and equality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Response to the Ukraine Crisis

Labour should present an alternative sanctions model that would allow the UK to designate individuals and entities at a similar or faster pace to the European Union and United States. While the Government has placed great stock in the benefits of the UK's post-Brexit 'independent' sanctions regime, the pace and breadth of UK sanctions has been less than that of the EU and US. The Labour model should focus on mapping the assets and interests within the UK, and London specifically, in order to both impact human rights abusers and reduce the amount of illicit finance in the UK.

International Development

Labour should emphasise the integral role that effective development assistance plays in building UK influence. If the Government wishes to demonstrate the value of liberty, winning friends through aid is a much stronger approach than winning customers through transactional development financing.

While the reestablishment of a separate development Department is an important long term goal, in the short term it will likely further damage the UK's aid effectiveness due to the complex process that would be required for 'demerging' the FCDO. Instead, focus should be placed on pressuring the Government to expedite the return to the 0.7% aid target as a matter of urgency.

Many democratic states and groups have launched their own 'Counter Belt and Road' projects in recent months. Labour should push the Government to explain how UK projects such as British International Investment and the 'Clean Green Initiative' will work in relation to the G7's Build Back Better World and the EU's Global Gateway.

In the absence of full coordination, Labour should push the Government to work with like-minded states to codify a series of democratic and human rights principles to guide these different projects. In this way, while the implementation will differ, there will be unity on the overall goals of these disparate development projects.

There is a clear contradiction in pledging new funds toward international support while the government has seriously hampered the effectiveness of UK international development in recent years by reducing the 0.7% aid spending commitment, and merging the Department for International Development with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Indo-Pacific: China

Labour should push the Government to explain how it intends to **reconcile the trade/values dilemma** in its engagement with Beijing. In the absence of a published China strategy, this point cuts to the core of the Government's lack of coherent approach to China.

Indo-Pacific: Trade

Labour should continue to press the Government to prioritise exemptions from the Inter-State Dispute Settlement system as an integral part of CPTPP negotiations, in order to protect important domestic policies and sensitive national industries. It should ask the Government to outline which specific industries will be safeguarded from ISDS upon accession to CPTPP.

While the UK should use CPTPP membership as a channel to promote labour/environmental standards, it should be cautious about expecting too much too quickly. Efforts to immediately shift member countries' approach to international norms would likely be counterproductive.

Labour should push for clarity on what the Government intends to do upon successful accession to the CPTPP. It should push the Government to provide a stance on potential CPTPP membership of both Taiwan and China.

Labour should outline a clear policy position on what its approach would be to negotiating entry to the CPTPP, setting clear red lines on critical national industries and an unwavering commitment to maintaining high labour and environmental standards. This would ensure Labour has a clear policy on a major trade agreement in case of an early general election.

Indo-Pacific: Defence

Labour should ensure any expansion of agreements like AUKUS is not done so without meaningful consultation with regional actors such as Japan and Taiwan, as the most immediate stakeholders of any increased military tension with China. While including countries such as Taiwan and Japan in the nuclear submarine programme would be dangerously provocative, including them in the technology-sharing aspects of AUKUS would be worthwhile, and a gesture of partnership in the region.

One concern around AUKUS is that its flagship nuclear submarine programme will be obsolete by the time it is delivered. Labour might press the Government to ensure sufficient focus is placed on the technological aspects of AUKUS, such as joint development of artificial intelligence and quantum technologies, to ensure the pact does not become redundant.

Labour should call on the Government to prioritise rebuilding trust with France after the diplomatic damage caused by AUKUS. While a UK-US-Australia security pact makes sense in a security context, France is still a major democracy, key NATO member, and a key European player in the Indo-Pacific.⁵

Europe

⁵ For further recommendations on AUKUS, please see NDP's [AUKUS Briefing Paper](#)

Labour should further raise the importance of UK-EU cooperation on democratic strengthening programmes and activities as a cornerstone of democratic cooperation. While such programmes in third-party countries are vital, there should also be increased cooperation in countering domestic threats to democracy in the UK and EU, such as state-backed disinformation and far-right extremism.

Labour should commit to the restoration of positive UK-EU relations as a cornerstone of its future foreign policy. This should be done both bilaterally with member states and with the European Union as a whole. Areas of clear mutual interest such as cross-border policing, condemning human rights abuses through fora like the UN, and sanctions are clear means of cooperation.

As well as pragmatic cooperation, Labour should promote the restoration of positive relations with the EU in the realms of education, culture, and research. Lowering barriers to cooperation in these areas - for example, through reintroducing a similar scheme to Erasmus - would be an effective way of refreshing cultural links with European nations.

At the same time, the UK should not approach Europe as a monolith. Leading a coherent and strong stance on recent issues such as the Ukraine crisis can demonstrate the UK's status as a leading democracy in its engagement among European nations whether they are EU members or not.

BRITISH INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT AND UK AID

In late 2021, the FCDO announced the [renaming and refocusing](#) of the UK's development finance institution, the Commonwealth Development Corporation, to British International Investment (BII). Truss pledged to mobilise up to £8bn⁶ a year in public and private finance to support infrastructure and technology in countries in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. A core aspect of BII is partnership with capital markets and sovereign wealth funds to "to scale up financing and help the private sector move in."⁷

Ranil Dissanayake of the Center for Global Development told the FT that the amount committed was "peanuts" compared to the size of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). There is also a lack of clarity as to how BII will tie into other investment initiatives such as the UK's [Clean Green Initiative](#) and the Washington-led G7 [Build Back Better World Initiative](#), both of which are apparently cooperative projects between democracies. At the same time, the European Union has launched the [Global Gateway](#) investment project, and on 20 January 2022, the UK and Australia announced that they "have agreed to cooperate more closely through investment in infrastructure"⁸ At the same time, the UK has faced criticism for being

⁶ Reported by some as £9bn, but in the speech the figure was given as £8bn.

⁷ Gov.uk, [Truss revamps British development finance institution to deliver jobs and clean growth](#), 24 November 2021

⁸ Gov.uk, [UK and Australia team up to encourage clean, reliable and transparent infrastructure investment in the Indo-Pacific](#), 20 January 2022.

an active contributor to the Beijing-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which funds projects under China's Belt and Road Initiative.⁹

The result of this is a confused tangle of overlapping, underlapping and replicatory development finance projects launched unilaterally, bilaterally, and multilaterally. Labour should push for clarity on how these myriad projects will come together to promote democracy, human rights, and labour/environmental standards in target countries.

The rebranding of UK development finance takes place after the Government's highly controversial decision to merge the UK's diplomatic and development ministries to form the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office in 2020, and the much-criticised reduction of aid spending from 0.7% of gross national income to 0.5% announced in November 2020.¹⁰ This is a key space in which Labour should hold the Government accountable. While British International Investment has been championed as an instrument of liberty, there has been much criticism around the fact that vital programmes dealing with issues such as conflict prevention in the Middle East and North Africa, clean water access, and girls education, have all suffered.¹¹

THE INDO-PACIFIC

The 'Tilt to the Indo-Pacific' is a core part of the Conservative Government's foreign policy vision as outlined in the integrated review.

The Tilt has been operationalised in several ways, including the formation of AUKUS, application to join the CPTPP, and acceptance as an ASEAN Dialogue Partner. It is telling that the January 21 speech took place in Sydney - it is clear that collaboration with Australia is a central part of the Government's plans to champion freedom and democracy in the Indo-Pacific. .

Most of these activities, as well as the UK's engagement with China, present difficult questions which the Government has not been able to answer. This section will outline several policy areas covered by the Tilt, including China, trade, and defence, the latter two led by major case studies of recent UK engagement in the Indo-Pacific.

China

There are, of course, myriad policy issues relating to China which cannot be covered in this briefing paper. Many commentators consider a desire on the Government's part to balance

⁹ Telegraph, [British backing for China's global ambitions raises the alarm](#), 9 January 2022

¹⁰ Devex, [Tracking the UK's controversial aid cuts](#), undated

¹¹ Ibid.

China's growing regional assertiveness to be a major driver behind the Tilt.¹² This brief section will highlight a central gap in the Government's China policy.

"We expressed our concern about China's economic coercive policies and we united to condemn Russia's aggression. Together, we showed our determination to stand shoulder to shoulder for freedom and democracy around the world." – Liz Truss, Lowy Institute, 21 January 2022

At the core of the Government's confused approach to China is the values/trade dilemma – that any significant efforts to hold the Chinese government accountable for its myriad human rights violations and atrocities would have attendant economic cost. Compare the above quotation from Liz Truss with the fact that the Prime Minister is pushing for closer UK-China economic ties.¹³ It is clear from these two examples alone that the values/trade dilemma represents a key fault line within Government policy.

Trade: The CPTPP

The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) is a free trade agreement. The UK has submitted an application for membership. CPTPP currently has 11 members: Japan, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Mexico, Chile and Peru. The total population of CPTPP countries numbers 500 million. Membership of the CPTPP is subject to unanimous agreement of existing members.¹⁴

UK membership of CPTPP has been described as a positive by Hiroshi Matsuura, former Visiting Fellow at Chatham House, as it would "set or renew its trade terms with 11 trading partners in just one negotiation."¹⁵ Deepening trade engagement with CPTPP members - especially strong economies like Japan, Singapore, and Australia - would help the UK provide a democratic counterweight to China's economic dominance in the Indo-Pacific. According to Matsuura, the UK's status as an "open, free market economy and solid democracy" would strengthen the credibility of CPTPP as an institution. With this in mind, CPTPP membership would present a clear opportunity for the UK to promote good governance, democracy, and robust labour/environmental standards among member states. However, this agenda should be pursued through step change, as the UK immediately attempting to set the rules would not likely be well-received.

However, there are also real concerns around the domestic implications of UK membership. According to New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, any economy seeking to join CPTPP must be sure that:

The commitments they make on access for goods, services, investment, government procurement and temporary entry for business persons meet the high standards agreed by existing CPTPP members.¹⁶

¹² Chatham House, [China and Brexit Drive the UK's 'Tilt' to Indo-Pacific](#), 27 November 2020

¹³ FT, [Boris Johnson seeks to forge closer economic ties with China](#), 11 February 2022

¹⁴ Institute for Government, [Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership \(CPTPP\)](#), 2 February 2021

¹⁵ Chatham House, [Why joining the CPTPP is a smart move for the UK](#), 19 March 2021

¹⁶ Focus Taiwan, [CPTPP members 'welcome' Taiwan's bid to join: New Zealand official](#), 11 October 2021

As is often the case with trade agreements, a key concern is the Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) system, whereby investors may sue governments in private courts for “measures which are deemed harmful to their profits”.¹⁷ New Zealand successfully negotiated exemption from the ISDS provisions of the CPTPP; Labour should push the UK to do the same.

¹⁸

The Government has acknowledged this issue with regards to the NHS:

As with other trade agreements, accession to CPTPP will not come at the expense of other key Government policies. Protecting the NHS is a fundamental principle of our trade policy. Our commitment to this will not change during our negotiations to accede to CPTPP. Our position is definitive: the NHS, its services and the price it pays for medicines are not on the table. They are not, and never will be, for sale to the private sector, whether overseas or domestic.¹⁹

However, it does not explain how the NHS would be safeguarded under the ISDS system specifically by outlining specific industries that would be exempt from ISDS. Given the range of industries that are critical to the NHS - from technology to food and drink - Labour should push for clarity on this issue as a matter of priority.

A key point of geopolitical tension within the CPTPP is the fact that both China and Taiwan have entered applications for membership. Commentators have expressed doubt at China’s potential for joining, due to the regulatory ‘hurdles’ it would have to overcome such as ending ‘non-commercial assistance’ to its state-owned enterprises, which would be unacceptable under the contestability provisions of the CPTPP.²⁰

Taiwan, from an economic perspective, is regarded as a much more viable candidate for CPTPP membership.²¹ Rather than economic concerns, the question around Taiwan membership is “whether the 11 existing CPTPP members have the political will to risk a significant fallout with China for allowing Taiwan to join”.²²

As the UK is likely to be the next CPTPP member (going simply by the timelines of its application) it will be essential that the UK Government develops a clear stance on the prospective memberships of China and Taiwan, as the CPTPP represents another key area in which the China/Taiwan issue is played out.

As a CPTPP member, the UK should outline that it will base support of China and Taiwan’s respective applications based on their ability to meet the [technical requirements](#) in areas including labour rights, environmental protection and conservation, and promoting cultural and social responsibility - all standards which China would not presently meet. This would be an effective way of championing high labour and environmental standards - and holding China accountable for practises such as [forced labour in Xinjiang](#) - without overt confrontation.

¹⁷ Trade Justice Movement, [Written evidence submission to Inquiry on Inward Foreign Direct Investment](#), February 2021

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gov.uk, UK approach to joining the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), updated 22 October 2021, p 9

²⁰ CEPS, [China’s CPTPP membership bid](#), 4 October 2021

²¹ East Asia Forum, [The CPTPP isn’t just a trade deal for Taiwan, it’s a survival plan](#), 19 November 2021

²² Ibid.

DEFENCE: AUKUS

If the UK is to champion liberty, it must champion it in an inclusive way. At present, AUKUS is an anglophone coalition with major implications for security in the Indo-Pacific. If the UK wants to show it is serious about its 'Tilt' to the Indo-Pacific, it should make efforts to include regional democracies such as Japan within pacts like AUKUS.

While it is likely unfeasible to include countries like Japan in the sharing of nuclear submarine technology, it would be wise to find a way to include such partners in other areas of cooperation such as the sharing of artificial intelligence and quantum technology. Given Japan's technological strengths and natural concerns about Beijing's growing military assertiveness, there is a clear case for greater inclusion of Japan in future projects. However, Japan's post-WW2 pacifism might complicate any attempts to include it in an overtly defence-focused agreement such as AUKUS.²³²⁴

Another prominent concern around AUKUS is that Australia will only have operational nuclear submarines by the 2030s at the earliest, by which time technological advances will have rendered them obsolete.²⁵

Beyond these points, Labour should ensure deepening UK security activity in the region fosters goodwill from Asia-Pacific countries. In its [briefing paper on AUKUS](#), NDP argued that

It is important that the UK, US and Australia - as three Western, mostly non-Asian states, do not make decisions on behalf of Asian countries without their consent and participation. So far, Japan and India's support for AUKUS is reassuring. However, Labour should push the UK to continue to engage actively with these countries, and to seek wider support particularly from South Korea, Malaysia and Indonesia, who are important Pacific players and have so far been either quiet or concerned about the deal.

This approach should be taken more broadly. As the UK 'Tilts' to the Indo-Pacific, it should focus on positive engagement with regional players and strengthening ties in a range of areas – diplomatic, cultural, educational, developmental – to build on AUKUS and demonstrate that the UK's intentions in the region are not wholly focussed on trade and security.

In its [briefing paper on AUKUS](#), NDP argued that reassurance of France and a more cooperative approach with European partners will be key to ensuring more productive relations going forward:

This is especially important for the UK, as a European country. Labour should support defence cooperation between the UK and EU states, and hold the UK Government to account for its thus far blasé response to French ire.²⁶

In the context of the network of liberty, positive UK-Europe and Euro-Atlantic relations are vital for projecting an image of democratic solidarity and resilience in the region.

There are also serious issues relating to the UK's broader engagement with Europe in recent years, which will be explored in the following section.

²³ The Diplomat, [AUKUS' Reception in the Indo-Pacific](#), 24 November 2021

²⁴ Chatham House, [Japan must disavow pacifism for collective defence](#), 22 June 2021

²⁵ RUSI, [What Does the AUKUS Deal Provide its Participants in Strategic Terms?](#), 21 September 2021

²⁶ New Diplomacy Project, [AUKUS: Security and foreign policy implications](#), 13 October 2021

EUROPE

While the Foreign Secretary's speeches placed great stock in the strength of democracies, neither made any mention of the European Union. The reasons for this are clearly political, as the Government was elected on a pro-Brexit campaign and manifesto. Given that the Foreign Secretary now has responsibility for post-Brexit negotiations, the Europe question becomes even more complicated for the Government. The Foreign Secretary's commercial approach to foreign policy is at odds with the rest of the Government's 'Get Brexit Done' mentality.

According to Freedom House, six of the ten 'freest' countries in the world are located in Europe. The European Union has extensive democratic strengthening programmes, most notably the [Eastern Partnership](#) policy which aims to deepen integration and political relations between the European Union and Eastern European states including Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, and Azerbaijan – all countries which Russia considers to be within its sphere of influence, if not parts of Russia itself.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS AND INTERVENTIONS

Will the Foreign Secretary tell us who the members of the network of liberty are?

Will the Foreign Secretary agree that cooperation with Europe is integral to any successful 'network of liberty', and will she commit to pursuing rapprochement with EU countries?

If the UK is set on promoting 'freedom not fear', will the Foreign Secretary take concrete action to demonstrate solidarity with countries like Australia and Lithuania, who are holding China accountable for its gross human rights violations and coercive trade practises?

Can the Foreign Secretary outline how she expects the UK to champion the network of liberty when the UK's relations with the EU are so soured?

Will the Foreign Secretary agree that the UK's world class aid programmes are a vital tool for championing democracy, and commit to a return to the 0.7% aid spending target as a matter of urgency?

Can the Minister outline if there are plans to develop further bilateral or multilateral agreements to share emerging defence capabilities, particularly with European allies? [From previous AUKUS brief]

Can the Foreign Secretary outline what the Government's medium- to long-term plans are for engagement with ASEAN, given that the UK is now an ASEAN Dialogue Partner?

Will the Foreign Secretary agree that education is one of the UK's greatest assets, and will she commit to lowering barriers for international students in the Asia-Pacific region to study at UK universities?

Does the Foreign Secretary agree that promoting democracy abroad requires a robust democracy at home, and that the Government's recent efforts to outlaw peaceful protest are fundamentally undemocratic?

About the authors

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