

Check against delivery

16 NOVEMBER 2014 | David Cameron, Prime Minister of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Press Conference, G20 International Media Centre, Brisbane

David Cameron, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

Good afternoon. First of all, I would like to thank Tony Abbott, the Australian Prime Minister, and the people of Brisbane for hosting such a successful, and purposeful G20. I think we have achieved a good deal in the last 48 hours, and it has been a well-organised, and well run G20. While we are on the other side of the world, and we're at something called the G20, my focus is very clear. That is delivering the long-term economic plan that is helping to turn Britain around, that's helping to get our people back to work. That's about securing prosperity for every family in Britain. That is my focus, and that has been my focus here for the last 48 hours. I think we have made some important steps forward that really help with that long-term economic plan, and help with the growth, and the jobs that people want in Britain. First of all, we focused on trade - it is good the trade facilitation agreement, so long stuck in the process, is now going to go ahead. That was a breakthrough at the G20. Also we're very focused on the trade deals that can add to British growth, to British jobs, and in particular, we've just had a successful meeting between the countries of the European Union on the one hand, and the United States and the other, to put rocket boosters under the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership - the TTIP - which we think can add some £10 billion to our side of the equation, and can result in real jobs. And I think it is important we start taking on the opponents of this deal, and exposing some of the arguments against. This is good for Britain, good for jobs, good for growth, good for British families. Second thing where we have made breakthroughs, is an issue that I put up front and centre at the G8 that I hosted in Northern Ireland a couple of years ago. That is making sure that big companies pay the taxes that they owe. This cooperation between different tax authorities to have greater transparency over tax, and make sure there is greater fairness over tax, we made some real progress. There are now over 92 different countries and tax authorities properly sharing information. As the OECD set out at this G20 meeting, the action we have already taken has resulted in \$37 billion in extra tax being paid by big companies.

This is all to the good.

The more we can make sure that big corporations pay their taxes properly, the less we have to tax hard-working people who I want to make sure keep more of their own money to spend as they choose.

So again, the tax issue, like the trade issue, is not some arcane, distant, dry, and dusty topic, it's directly relevant to delivering growth and jobs and the long term economic plan in the UK.

The third area I would highlight is the importance of keeping our people safe.

And I think the discussions we've had here about Ebola, which is obviously the biggest world health crisis we have faced in many, many years, I think it has been purposeful here. Britain has played a leading role in terms of the partnership we have with Sierra Leone, where we have deployed troops, we have deployed British warship, British helicopters - where we're training 800 people every week in Sierra Leone.

We have seen from other countries financial commitments, we have seen from other countries now more commitments in terms of health workers.

And the best way we can keep our people safe from Ebola is by tackling it at source, and I think some good progress has been made here at the G20.

Final issue in terms of keeping our people safe is the importance of being very clear to Russia that the continued destabilisation of Ukraine is simply unacceptable, and I think there has been good unity between European countries, and the US of America - we have been discussing it at a separate meeting - that we will continue to maintain the sanctions against Russia.

We'll continue to keep up the pressure, and that if Russia continues to destabilise Ukraine, further measures would follow.

This is important because although some have said, of course, there's a cost to sanctions, and there is a cost to sanctions, there will be a far-greater cost of allowing a frozen conflict on the continent of Europe to be created and maintained.

So it's right that we take this action.

So I think it's been a good G20. We made some progress on some things that really matter to British families, British people back at home.

And it's been good to be part of this work.

Happy to take some questions, and if you can say who you are and where you're from, thank you.

James Landale from the BBC - I know where you're from.

James Landale, BBC: I'll tell you anyway.

The G20 has a tradition of overpromising and under delivering. How meaningful is this new growth target? And on Ukraine - do you believe the pressure that's been put on President Putin this weekend will actually change his strategy in Ukraine, or will he be more determined to defy the lot of you?

Prime Minister Cameron: Firstly, on the issue, I think that's unfair on the G20 on overpromising. If you think of two of the issues that the G20 has really pushed in recent years - the first, making sure we reform, recapitalise, and strengthen our banks and financial systems, so that never again do we have a situation where a bank falls over, and has to be supported by taxpayers, you know, that has been largely solved by the G20 and the hard work of Mark Carney and the Financial Stability Board.

Think of the second issue.

This issue of getting companies to properly pay their taxes.

This is an issue that for years had been left alone.

I put it squarely on the agenda of the G8. The G20 has taken on the work. And whereas it was just a few tax authorities sharing this information so that companies had nowhere to hide, it's now 92 different tax authorities.

So of course summits can - they can be lengthy communiques, lots of promises and all the rest of it.

I would argue some real progress has been made by the G20 over the last few years, and we should recognise that.

On Ukraine...

James Landale, BBC: What about now?

Prime Minister Cameron: In terms of the work Tony Abbott did to bring together the members of the G20, and get us all to throw in extra measures we could take to boost global growth - which would result in an extra 2% of growth over the coming years for the world - as the head of the OECD put it, he said that if that was achieved, it would be like adding another Australia, and another New Zealand to the world economy.

So, it is significant.

And I think if everyone keeps those promises - and we'll certainly keep the promises that we have made - you will see extra growth, extra jobs, and a boost to the world economy. And I think that is important.

In terms of Ukraine, what I would say is, look, I think this is going to be a test of the stamina, and a test of the political will of the United States, and the countries of the European Union.

I think we will meet that test. I think we have done so far.

I think people have been surprised that the European Union and the United States of America have moved in tandem to say that what happened in Crimea, that's what's happening in Ukraine is unacceptable, and then to take step by step sanctions and other measures in order to demonstrate just how unacceptable, in the 21st century, this sort of bullying by a big country of a smaller country on the continent of Europe...to show how unacceptable this is.

We must stick at it.

Now, will it take time in order to make sure that we get the outcome that we need? Yes, I'm sure that it will.

But I think President Putin can see that he is at a crossroads.

If he continues to destabilise Ukraine, there'll be further sanctions, further measures, and there will be a completely different relationship between European countries and America on the one hand, and Russia on the other.

But he also knows there is a different path that he could take.

He could recognise, as he put it to me last night, that Ukraine is a single political space, and recognise that that single political space should be respected, and should have the ability to make its own decisions about its own future.

And if he takes that path, then we can see sanctions eased, we can see a proper relationship between Britain and Europe on the one hand and Russia on the other and we could have an altogether better future.

I think what has been good about this G20, is a very clear message has been delivered by the countries of the European Union and America to Russia about how we're going to approach this in the months and years ahead.

Francis?

Francis Elliott, The Times: Thanks very much. Francis Elliott from The Times.

Just following on from your discussions with Vladimir Putin.

Is it your impression now that the Russian President thinks that Bashar al-Assad has to go in Syria? Do you think there's movement?

Prime Minister Cameron: You'd have to ask him what his opinion is.

I think where there is at least some common ground, is that Russia, like other countries of the world, faces a threat of Islamist extremism. And everywhere there is conflict, and civil conflict, as there is in Syria, you see a breeding ground for this Islamist extremism.

In spite of our profound differences over Ukraine, and indeed our fairly profound differences over what has happened in Syria, it is worth keeping up a dialogue with Russia, as I have done, and with Vladimir Putin, as I have done, over what I think is the right answer - which is a transition in Syria to having a regime that can represent all of its people.

To me, the answer to the problems of Syria isn't that different to the answer to the problems of Iraq.

You need a Government that can represent not just Alawites, but Alawites, Sunnis, and Christians, and others in Syria, as you need a Government in Iraq that can represent Sunni, Shia, and Kurd.

There is some common ground there, but there's a lot of talking and discussions to be had.

George?

George Parker, The Financial Times: You mentioned you were going to put rocket boosters under the EU-US trade negotiations, TTIP.

I wondered exactly what that meant? And you mentioned the opponents of the deal.

Who are the opponent of the deal, and how are you going to overcome them?

Prime Minister Cameron: In terms of the rocket boosters, what you have seen is a statement I think issued by Barack Obama, by the US, and I think you'll see a statement coming out of the European commission as well.

We had a positive meeting where everyone agreed this is a deal we want to do.

It is part of the European commission's mandate, and I think there is a sense that these deals only work if you, you know, get on with the negotiation, and start making agreements, because otherwise people who, for whatever reason oppose these agreements, start gaining some traction.

You ask who are these people, and what are the arguments against.

The argument I was making at this meeting between European countries and the USA, is we have to take on the arguments.

I think they're very weak.

There are people who argue in some way this could damage the National Health Service.

I think that is nonsense.

It is our National Health Service, it's in the public sector, it will stay in the public sector - that's not going to change.

It will remain free at the point of use.

There's no threat, I believe, from TTIP to the National Health Service, and we should knock that on the head as an empty threat.

I think other people believe that somehow these investor state resolutions - that can cause problems.

Well, we've signed trade deal after trade deal, and there has never been a problem in the past.

I think we need to make two arguments for TTIP, and maybe in a more clear way.

One is the classic free trade argument for growth, and jobs, and investment.

Britain is a trading nation - it's how we made our way in the past.

It's how we'll make our way in the future.

The opportunities for Britain of trading more with the United States of America are clear and there for all to see.

There's a second argument, which perhaps will appeal more, perhaps to some of those who are nervous about these deals, which is, look, if Europe and America can make this agreement - an agreement that will actually deal with a lot of things like environmental standards, and food standards, and other standards - then actually, you're going to have two organisations, the EU on the one hand, and America on the other, that have an interest in decent and robust standards, rather than standards being set by countries making ad hoc deals with other countries in the world, and not having those standards in place.

So I think there's a very strong argument that needs to be made on those grounds as well.

I'm hopeful of progress. I sensed an enthusiasm from both the other European countries in the room, and also from the President of the United States to get on and do this.

John?

John Ray, ITV News: On the economy, I read a lot of warm words and good intentions there.

Who wouldn't want an extra 2.1 per cent growth, especially if you're in the Eurozone.

Isn't this just wishful thinking? On the environment, there's a passage about the green climate fund.

President Barack Obama has put \$3 billion into that.

For the sake of your own credibility, won't Britain's contribution have to be substantial as well?

Do you have a figure on how much we will be putting into that fund?

Prime Minister Cameron: First of all, on the global economy. Let's be clear about a couple of things. First of all, Britain comes to this G20 with a strongly growing economy, with a record fall in unemployment this year, and evidence that our long-term economic plan is working.

Indeed, the head of the IMF, Christine Lagarde, said that at this G20 it's Britain and America that are leading the pack in terms of the economy.

We should be clear about the second thing, which is there are some worrying warning signs in the global economy that are threats to us, and our growth, as the difficulties in the Eurozone, which is close to being on the brink of a third recession in just six years.

There's the concerns about stability and safety, because of Ebola, because of Ukraine.

Other countries aren't growing as fast in the developing world as they have been.

So there are threats and issues that we need to be very alert to.

In terms of what the G20 has done, I think it has cleared some of the concerns out of the way.

I think the work on financial stability is important.

I think the work on companies paying their tax is important.

But we need to be very alert to the fact that, of course, there are these other threats to the British recovery which we need to address.

I think if every country that has come here does the things that they said they would, in terms of helping to boost growth, for instance signing these trade deals, then we can see growth continue.

But, you know, I'm not at all complacent about the position we're in, because we've worked hard, we have got a growing economy, we have done the right things, but we need to be very aware of the threats that we face.

On the Green Climate Fund.

Britain has already set aside a substantial amount of money for green climate funds, and all we have to do now is to decide how much of that already set aside money to put into this specific fund. And as ever in these things, Britain will play its part, and will play a very positive part.

I think it's been good actually on this occasion that some other countries have been encouraged to come forward and put some money down.

But everybody knows Britain will play our part, because we have already set aside money.

So, when we make an announcement, it's won't be new money - it's money already set aside for that purpose.

OK. One, two, three along here.

Jason Groves, Daily Mail: There are reports overnight that Jihadi John was wounded in air strikes.

We don't know whether that's right.

Would you be happy to see him wounded or killed out there rather than coming back to the UK to face justice? What sort of message should young people thinking of going to Syria draw from this?

Prime Minister Cameron: We should be in no doubt that I want Jihadi John to face justice.

You know, for the appalling things - the appalling acts that have been carried out in Syria.

I wouldn't make any comment on individual issues, and strikes, and the like.

You wouldn't expect me to do that.

I think the point, though, is clear - If people travel to Syria or Iraq in order to conduct terror operations against British people, British citizens, or people back here in Britain, then they're putting themselves in harm's way.

There shouldn't be any doubt about that.

Steven Swinford, The Daily Telegraph: Ed Miliband last week suggested that some kind of dark forces were to blame for destabilising his leadership.

Do you think he's being paranoid?

Prime Minister Cameron: I think referring to the new statesman as a dark force is the sort of thing you would expect from a conservative rather than the leader of the Labour Party. But I'll leave that to others.

Stefan Armbruster, SBS World News Australia: Your relationship with Tony Abbott has been described as a bromance.

The Australian Government was hesitant to deal with climate change at the G20. How did you convince your bro, Tony, to talk about climate change at this meeting? And you said that every nation should bring something along to the Paris Climate Talks.

You have just sort of dealt with that from the British side.

What would you suggest to your friend, Tony, to bring along himself?

Prime Minister Cameron: Well, we have a very good relationship. We work well together.

I have got a lot of respect for what he's been doing, particularly on the economic front here in Australia.

In terms of this meeting, and climate change, we were always going to discuss climate change.

The G20's core purpose is very much about the economy, and the issues - sometimes they can sound rather dry - these issues of financial regulation, and the rest of it, but they have been very important to delivering stability and growth in the global economy.

But we always discuss climate change at these meetings, not least because, you know, you have got the world's two biggest carbon emitters, China and America, round the table.

I think it was a good discussion that we had, because I think the steps that America and China have taken, I think move things forward in terms of getting a deal in Paris.

Britain obviously comes here with, you know, a very, very strong record.

The first country in the world to introduce climate change legislation.

The first country in the world to introduce a green investment bank.

A country in the world that has the largest offshore wind market of any country in the world. We've made real steps in reducing our carbon emissions, and in setting our country on a path of reducing carbon.

I believe we should try and reduce carbon at the lowest possible cost.

That is the aim we should have.

In terms of Australia, look, it's not for me to lecture others.

The point I make is that everyone has to bring something to Paris.

Clearly, Australia's already set out how it's going to cut its carbon emissions by some 5 per cent.

I think it's a 19 per cent cut on usual business. But I think there's compelling arguments to say that everyone should, you know, look at their own country, think what they can do to help bring about a global deal.

But that global deal will crucially rely on the biggest emitters - on China and America - really stepping up.

Because it's when that happens, that I think other countries that account for a smaller percentage of the world emissions can see the point of joining in. But I'd urge everyone to join in.

Right, last couple of questions.

Gentlemen here.

Amy(?), Press TV: Prime Minister, Iran nuclear talks is coming up on November, 24.

Do you think whether Iran reach to an agreement or not, or a deal, do you think relations between Iran and UK would improve? Or is it basically related to the agreement?

Prime Minister Cameron: Well, it's obviously the biggest determinant, I think, of your relations.

Obviously, you know, it was a real setback in our relations what happened to the British embassy in Tehran.

We have started the process of very gradually rebuilding a relationship, and I was the first Prime Minister, I think, for 35 years to meet with an Iranian President as I did with President Rouhani in New York.

But I think absolutely key to this relationship will be achieving a deal that demonstrably makes sure that Iran is a distance away from ever developing a nuclear weapon.

That is...the Iranians say they have no intention of having a nuclear weapon.

They want a purely civil nuclear program.

If that's the case, they shouldn't have any difficulty signing the sort of agreement that is envisaged.

I think these talks are absolutely vital.

I think Iran faces a very clear choice to have that sort of agreement that can then progressively lead to Iran having a more normal relationship with the rest of the world, or continuing down the course that Iran has been going down, in which case the sanctions that have been put in place - and they're tough and robust sanctions - including the EU oil embargo, will continue.

That's what we face. I have very much hope a deal will be achieved.

But it has to be achieved on the basis that Iran can demonstrate that it is not taking the military nuclear path.

Final question.

Alannah, One Plus One Ukraine: Obviously on the Ukraine question.

You mentioned some further measures.



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What exactly further measures are you considering on top of the sanctions which clearly haven't delivered desired results to stop Mr Putin doing what he's doing.

Prime Minister Cameron: What the European Union has set out, I think very clearly, is a step by step approach.

So far I think we have been true to those steps, that when Russia has done something further to destabilise Ukraine, a further step has been taken.

Now, I hope that isn't necessary.

I hope that even at this late stage, President Putin takes a different path. But I think he knows that if he were to continue down the destabilisation path, further measures, like those that have already been introduced, would be introduced by America and the European Union.

But as I say, let's hope that isn't the outcome.

It's not the outcome any of us seek, but I think that Russia needs to know that there is a real unity of purpose between America and the European Union in making sure we don't have some permanent frozen conflict on the continent of Europe.

If that is to happen, I don't think the relationship between Russia on the one hand, and Britain and Europe and America on the other hand can be the same.

Thank you very much for coming.