

Speech

Prime Minister's remarks at the UK-France Summit press conference: 10 July 2025

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From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street (</government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street>) and The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP (</government/people/keir-starmer>)

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Good afternoon. It's a real pleasure to be here with President Macron, a firm friend to me personally – and a firm ally to the United Kingdom.

We first met at the Élysée, I think about two years ago, before I came into office, when I was leader of the opposition.

And it was clear to me then – that we had a shared sense of the dangerous times we're living through.

And of our responsibility to step up and to lead. We also share the fundamental belief that we serve our people better – create better jobs and opportunities.

Make our nations stronger, fairer and more secure if we work together.

And the State Visit has been a celebration of this relationship -

Our unique bonds of history and of culture.

And today, our task is to look forward.

To deliver a step change in this partnership...

To meet the challenges of this moment...

And get the results that people want to see.

Starting – first – with tackling illegal migration.

Now, this is a global crisis, and it's a European crisis....

But it is also – very acutely...

A crisis for our two nations –

A crisis of law, security, humanity – and fairness.

We face a sprawling, multibillion pound enterprise...

Run by organised criminal gangs...

Leading hundreds of people to their death in the Channel.

So we are determined, together, to end this vile trade.

There is no silver bullet here.

But with a united effort...

New tactics –

And a new level of intent –

We can finally turn the tables.

So I'm pleased to announce our agreement today...

On a groundbreaking returns pilot.

For the very first time, migrants arriving via small boat...

Will be detained...

And returned to France –

In short order.

In exchange for every return,

A different individual will be allowed to come here...

Via a safe route, controlled and legal...

Subject to strict security checks...

And only open to those...

Who have not tried to enter the UK illegally.

This will show others trying to make the same journey...

That it will be in vain.

And the jobs they've been promised in the UK

Will no longer exist –

Because of the nationwide crackdown we're delivering on illegal working –

Which is on a completely unprecedented scale.

The President and I have agreed that this pilot will be implemented in coming weeks.

Now, I know some people will still ask –

Why should we take anyone in?

So let me address that directly.

We accept genuine asylum seekers –

Because it is right that we offer a haven to those in most dire need.

But there is also something else here...

Something more practical.

Which is that we simply cannot solve a challenge like stopping the boats...

By acting alone and telling our allies that we won't play ball.

That is why today's agreement is so important...

Because we will solve this...

Like so many of our problems...

By working together.

Just look at the steps the French Government is planning...

Subject to their ongoing Maritime review...

To allow their officers to intervene in shallow waters...

And prevent more boats from launching.

This is a big step.

I want to thank the President for driving it through.

So this is our plan, together:

Hard-headed, aggressive action on all fronts...

To break the gangs' business model –

Secure our borders...

And show that by attempting to reach the UK by small boat...

Will only end in failure, detention and return.

Second, we have also made real progress today on boosting jobs and growth...

Building on our new agreement with the EU.

We're ambitious for what we can do together...

As G7 economies...

Close trading partners...

And leaders in areas that will dominate in years to come.

Together our countries account for over half of European spending on research and technology.

So we've gone further today...

Collaborating on satellite connectivity...

Bringing together our leading supercomputers – to seize the opportunities created by AI...

And bringing down barriers to trade and investment in strategic sectors.

Just this week we've welcomed EDF's major investment in Sizewell C –

Which will create thousands of jobs,

Boost our energy security,

And protect billpayers for years to come.

Third, we have strengthened our work...

To stand together for European security, and in support of Ukraine –

Because I'm clear –

The security of the British people starts in Ukraine.

We have just co-chaired a meeting of the Coalition of the Willing –

Including representatives from the United States – for the first time.

We announced plans for a new “Multinational Force Ukraine.”

Headquartered in Paris –

So that we're ready to support a peace deal when it comes.

But while Putin turns his back on peace...

We are rallying more support for Ukraine right now...

To defend their people – and force Putin to the table.

Now, as Europe's only nuclear powers...

And as leaders in NATO...

We play a vital role in preserving the peace and security on this continent.

So today we have updated the historic Lancaster House treaty –

To protect our people, and our way of life.

This is a major modernisation.

We are overhauling the Combined Joint Expeditionary Force –

To make it five times larger...

50,000 troops strong...

Able to act across every domain.

But we're going further.

This morning, we signed the Northwood Declaration.

Confirming for the first time...

That we are coordinating our independent nuclear deterrents.

From today, our adversaries will know –

That any extreme threat to this continent...

Would prompt a response from our two nations.

There is no greater demonstration of the importance of this relationship.

And while we stand together for our collective defence...

We must also deliver a defence dividend for working people.

So we have agreed a deeper industrial partnership today...

To bring our defence industries closer than ever before.

We're not just talking about stepping up...

On defence, jobs and growth –

We're delivering it.

Previous governments tried and failed to secure results like this.

We can achieve them now...

Because we have taken the time and care...

To do the real work...

The quiet, serious diplomacy...

To build proper relationships...

Which multiply our strength and the opportunities we enjoy.

So Emmanuel, thank you so much for being here.

We represent two fiercely proud and independent nations.

But by working together...

We are delivering for our people...

And we are a force for good in a dangerous world.

Thank you, Emmanuel, and over to you.

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