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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
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HOUSE OF LORDS

OFFICIAL REPORT

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The following abbreviations are used to show a Member's party affiliation:

Abbreviation	Party/Group
CB	Cross Bench
Con	Conservative
DUP	Democratic Unionist Party
GP	Green Party
Ind Lab	Independent Labour
Ind SD	Independent Social Democrat
Ind UU	Independent Ulster Unionist
Lab	Labour
Lab Co-op	Labour and Co-operative Party
LD	Liberal Democrat
Non-afl	Non-affiliated
PC	Plaid Cymru
UKIP	UK Independence Party
UUP	Ulster Unionist Party

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House of Lords

Friday 25 February 2022

10 am

Prayers—read by the Lord Bishop of Coventry.

Health and Care Bill

Order of Consideration Motion

10.06 am

Moved by **Lord Ashton of Hyde**

That the amendments for the Report stage be marshalled and considered in the following order:

Clause 1, Schedule 1, Clauses 2 to 14, Schedule 2, Clauses 15 to 17, Schedule 3, Clauses 18 to 27, Schedule 4, Clause 28, Schedule 5, Clauses 29 to 40, Schedule 6, Clauses 41 to 43, Schedule 7, Clauses 44 to 61, Schedule 8, Clauses 62 and 63, Schedule 9, Clauses 64 to 68, Schedule 10, Clause 69, Schedule 11, Clauses 70 to 74, Schedule 12, Clauses 75 to 98, Schedule 13, Clauses 99 to 112, Schedule 14, Clauses 113 to 123, Schedule 15, Clauses 124 to 149, Schedule 16, Clauses 150 to 159, Schedule 17, Clause 160, Schedule 18, Clauses 161 to 170, Title.

Motion agreed.

Ukraine

Motion to Take Note

10.06 am

Moved by **Baroness Goldie**

That this House takes note of the current situation in Ukraine.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Baroness Goldie) (Con): My Lords, this is a sombre occasion, but I still welcome the opportunity to provide this House with an update on the latest situation inside Ukraine.

On Thursday, at 5 am Ukrainian time, Russia launched a wholly unprovoked and completely unjustified assault on a sovereign country by air, land and sea. After weeks of military build-up, false-flag events and cyberattacks, reinforced by incessant lies and shameless denial, President Putin finally gave the go-ahead for his so-called special military operation. By any other name, it is a blatantly illegal invasion—utterly shameful and completely shocking.

Since then, we have witnessed a procession of horror as an innocent population of some 45 million people is subjected to a relentless bombardment of missiles and bombs. As I speak, Russia, aided by its Belarusian ally, is invading on multiple fronts. Ukraine's infrastructure is being blown up. Its cities are under siege. Despite claims in Russian media to the contrary, it is unlikely that Russia has achieved its planned day one military objectives. Ukrainian forces have presented fierce resistance across all axes of Russia's advance. The Russian forces are likely consolidating their limited gains, but Russian strikes and exchanges of artillery fire have continued throughout the night. None the less, Ukrainians are maintaining a brave and doughty defence. Their courage

and resolve are deserving of our highest admiration and respect. It is notable that there have been protests in Russia over Putin's decision, including from Ksenia Sobchak, the daughter of Putin's former boss, the late Anatoly Sobchak, the former mayor of St Petersburg.

As a United Nations Security Council member, Russia is charged with establishing and maintaining international peace and security. How hollow does that sound? Russia has made a mockery of those commitments. It has ripped up agreements that it signed up to: the Helsinki Final Act; the Charter of Paris; the Budapest memorandum; and the NATO-Russia Founding Act. All have been shredded. Instead of choosing the path of peace, President Putin has chosen the path of the warmongering pariah. His actions, and his alone, have brought about a continental conflict on a scale that we have not seen since the end of the Second World War. The Russian President has knowingly and wilfully precipitated a refugee crisis of unprecedented proportions and he has set in motion the catastrophic consequences that will not only kill many innocent Ukrainians but, tragically, see many young Russians return home in zinc-lined coffins.

Ukraine is not a NATO member but the United Kingdom was swift to recognise its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Today, we continue to stand up for its rights as a country with a legitimate, democratically elected Government. We remain committed to supporting Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty within internationally recognised borders.

It should be reiterated at every turn that the only reason why we have arrived at this appalling situation is because of decisions made by President Putin himself. He rejected every offer of diplomacy, even while the UK did all in its power to avoid this situation. In recent weeks, the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Defence Secretary have all been engaged in numerous efforts with our international counterparts to reach out to Russia. Last week, the Defence Secretary met Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and General Valery Gerasimov in Moscow. During that meeting, Defence Minister Shoigu echoed President Putin's assurances that there would be no invasion—lies. All the while, international leaders, including President Biden and President Macron, sought to offer President Putin a way out of this crisis. One by one, their overtures were rebuffed. The evidence is irrefutable: the Russian dictator's mind was already made up.

Today, once again, we urge Russia in the strongest possible terms to call off its attack and return to the diplomatic table, but make no mistake: President Putin will pay the price for his barbarism. In concert with our allies, the UK is doing everything in its power to bring pressure to bear on the Kremlin.

First, as announced by the Prime Minister yesterday, we are introducing a massive package of sanctions designed to constrict the Russian economy. We will end Europe's collective dependence on Russian energy. German Chancellor Scholz's decision to stop Nord Stream 2 was a brave and welcome first step. He is absolutely right. We will also be maximising, in tandem with our US and European allies, economic pressure on Russia. Yesterday, the Prime Minister set out some of the steps that we are taking to limit its ability to do

[BARONESS GOLDIE]

business. These include imposing a full asset freeze on state-owned Russian bank VTB, bringing in powers to exclude all Russian banks from the UK financial system and stopping them accessing sterling and clearing payments through the UK.

We will also be introducing new powers to ban Russian state and private companies from raising funds in the UK, as well as stopping them dealing in securities and loans. Russian nationals will find that there are limits to the amount of money that they can deposit in UK bank accounts. The Russian puppet state, Belarus, will also face sanctions. To further constrain the Kremlin, we will be placing asset freezes on hundreds more entities and individuals, including all major manufacturers that support President Putin's war machine. Russian airline Aeroflot is now banned from the UK and there will be legislation to ban export of all dual-use items to Russia, including a range of high-end, critical technological equipment and components in sectors including electronics, telecommunications, and aerospace. Russian oligarchs will also find that there is nowhere to hide. A new kleptocracy cell in the National Crime Agency will be targeting sanctions evasion and corrupt Russian assets hidden in the UK. In relation to SWIFT, as the Prime Minister has said, nothing is off the table. We are working with international partners.

Secondly, we are upping our defensive military support to Ukraine. The UK was one of the first countries in Europe to send defensive weaponry to help the Ukrainians and we remain an agile defence partner, responding to their request for defensive capability. We have also helped to train more than 22,000 Ukrainian troops. Last month, we also took the decision to provide lethal aid to Ukraine, complementing support from allies and partners. Thirdly, we are bolstering our support for NATO. It is vital at this time to show our iron-clad commitment to Article 5 of the NATO treaty. It is not the disposition of NATO forces but the appeal of its values that threatens the Kremlin. President Putin has made no secret of the fact that he regards the demise of the Soviet Union as

“the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century”.

His recent pronouncements should leave no one in any doubt about the serious threat that he poses to his neighbours. Nor can we forget his chilling warning to the West that any attempt to stop or interfere with Russia's invasion of Ukraine would lead to

“consequences never encountered in your history”.

Yesterday, all 30 members of the North Atlantic Council met in emergency session and agreed to activate NATO's defence plans. Consequently, the alliance is now strengthening collective defence across every domain. The NAC has deployed thousands more troops to the eastern NATO flank. It has more than 100 jets at high alert to protect airspace and more than 120 allied ships at sea from high north to the Mediterranean. The UK is supporting these efforts. We are sending troops to augment the British-led NATO battle group in Estonia. We are deploying RAF Typhoon fighters and Royal Navy warships to protect south-eastern Europe. Our newest aircraft carrier, HMS “Prince of Wales”, now the afloat command platform of NATO's maritime high-readiness force, is on standby.

The NAC also addressed a request by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia to hold urgent consultations under Article 4 of the Washington treaty. These allow members states to start consultations whenever they believe that the territorial integrity, political independence or security of an ally is under threat. All NATO members share the same common values and the same willingness to defend those values, come what may. Today, NATO is convening once more to discuss next steps.

Meanwhile, the UK is also shoring up its other partnerships with like-minded allies. On Monday and Tuesday of this week, the Defence Secretary met leaders of our 10-nation joint expeditionary force at Belvoir Castle in Leicestershire. There he underlined our collective resolve to stand together for security and stability in our region and announced that we will shortly conduct an exercise demonstrating JEF nations' freedom of movement in the Baltic Sea. Finally, we are taking immediate steps to provide humanitarian aid for those who now find themselves displaced. We have put a thousand troops on standby to deal with the exodus of people from Ukraine. When it comes to UK citizens, we continue to support our colleagues in the embassy, which has relocated from Kyiv to the city of Lviv in western Ukraine.

It goes without saying that our thoughts and prayers remain with the Ukrainian people, many of whom have family and friends in the UK, and who now find themselves under attack for no reason whatsoever. At the same time, we remain on guard. While there is no indication at present that Russia intends to directly target British or NATO forces, we should expect their forces and proxies to launch cyberattacks and misinformation campaigns, seeking opportunities to embarrass the UK or NATO and to undermine our resolve. We stand ready to protect our country against any threats, whether conventional or in cyberspace.

However, I am afraid that there is no disguising that a dark new chapter has opened in our history. Those of us who, like me, recall the euphoria at the fall of the Berlin Wall and the lifting of the Iron Curtain never imagined that the day would dawn when war would once more cast its long shadow across the European continent. Yet President Putin has decided to redraw the map of Europe and to heat up the frozen conflicts of the Cold War. His pointless actions do not just strike at an innocent sovereign nation but show contempt for the very ideals of the democracy that we cherish.

We now face a serious threat to our rules-based order and all the risk of miscalculation that that brings. This is a watershed moment in the life of Euro-Atlantic security, but if there is any solace to be taken from recent days, it is in the solidarity that our allies have shown in the face of aggression. Countries across the world have condemned the Kremlin's atrocities. The G7 and NATO stand united. As the Prime Minister has said, President Putin's outrageous attempts to destroy democracy cannot be allowed to succeed, so we will continue working with our allies for as long as it takes to ensure that diplomatically, politically, economically and militarily Putin is not allowed to realise his appalling ambitions. We will continue to do all that is necessary to defend the cause of peace and justice.

10.20 am

Lord Collins of Highbury (Lab): My Lords, I thank the noble Baroness for her introduction to this debate. I am also grateful to the usual channels and the Government for facilitating it. I want to pick up on something that the noble Baroness said: these are ordinary people, and the pictures we saw on the television last night and this morning are deeply shocking. I have no doubt that every one of us in the Chamber has met someone with family in Ukraine. My own husband works with three Ukrainian women who are so upset, it is unbelievable. That is what we should be making our judgment about today. We should always reflect on those ordinary people.

I was extremely pleased to see on today's list—and I look forward to hearing—the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill. His experience and knowledge, particularly on security and government matters, will make an invaluable contribution to the future work of this House and also to today's debate.

As my right honourable friend David Lammy wrote in today's *Guardian*, Putin's invasion of Ukraine is an unprovoked outrage and a heinous violation of international law. It is proof of his utter disregard for the health and wealth of the people of Russia and Ukraine.

As the noble Baroness said, the situation in Ukraine is changing by the minute; we do not know how the next few hours, days or even years will play out. But what I do know is that what will not change is the united determination of this Parliament and this country to hold Putin and his acolytes to account.

As we heard in yesterday's Statement, Putin has sought to create a false justification for his actions. Russia faces no threat from NATO or Ukraine. As we heard from the noble Baroness, this is a significant moment in global politics that will have far-reaching implications for future interaction with Putin's Russia.

Our sanctions and those announced by the EU last night are severe, but they need speedy and strong implementation. But we should also aim higher, to ensure that we cut Russia out of the western economic system, targeting the finance, energy, technology and defence sectors, as well as individuals linked to Putin and the Russian Government. The effects of our actions should be deep and long-lasting. This confrontation will, as the Prime Minister said, last for years into the future.

The Government must now also finally expunge corrupt Russian money from the United Kingdom. Allies of Putin are still able to use the UK to launder dirty money, so we need to see the full implementation of all the recommendations of the Russia report. As my noble friend Lady Smith of Basildon said last night, the Elections Bill, which we are considering and which had its Second Reading this week, introduces new loopholes to allow foreign donations to United Kingdom political parties. We will seek to amend the Bill to remove those new loopholes. But, in the light of the actions and the terrible and distressing scenes we have seen on television, I hope that the Ministers—the noble Lord and the noble Baroness—will speak to the Prime Minister about removing these provisions from the Bill and report back to your Lordships' House.

To defeat Russian aggression, we need to do more than simply attack Putin's bank balance. Sanctions must be as comprehensive as possible, but we need a broader response to face down his aggression. To defeat Putin we need to unite against the ideology of what Putinism stands for—an ideology that is mirrored in the despots and dictators we see in the rest of the world: in China, in the Middle East and beyond. Those despots will be watching every single move we make from today onwards, and we need to ensure that our response is strong and determined, because they will determine their next moves based on ours. We must not be at all slow in coming forward on this.

Russia's attack will have long-term implications for the security of Europe. If Putin is successful in the short term, the new front line to Russian aggression will widen to include Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Hungary, as well as Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Of course, as the Minister said, we need to strengthen our work with our NATO and European allies and be in lock-step with them in every way. But we need to go beyond that unity and resolve. We need to rally the rest of the world to our position and ensure that there is an international coalition that will oppose this grievous act of war and counter Putin's ideology and nationalistic expansion. We need to look beyond to other global players to raise the question of the need for sovereign UN states to support the principle of sovereignty and democracy. That is a vital component of our strategy.

As we have seen on the streets of Moscow and other cities in Russia, many ordinary Russian citizens are deeply concerned and upset about Russian troops wading across their nearest neighbour's borders—the home of many of their family and friends. We need to ensure that we utilise our huge soft power to ensure that we communicate with those people and that they are able to hear the truth and see what is being done in their name. So I hope the noble Lord the Minister will be able to give us a very strong response in that regard. We must never allow our determination to confront Putin to obscure our desire for friendship and peace with the Russian people.

I will conclude with a final point on humanitarian support and aid. I know that the Government are committed to this, as the noble Baroness said, and I certainly heard that in my discussions with the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad. It is really important that we reassure all our allies who are neighbours to Ukraine that we will be there for them and will support them in every way to make sure that humanitarian support is given. I also heard Ben Wallace on the radio this morning. He is absolutely right. Whatever happens in terms of fighting on the street—and the determination of the Ukrainian people cannot be in doubt to anyone who has heard some of the speeches on the radio and the TV this morning—we need to ensure that we give them not only the fullest humanitarian support but the tools to do the job to fight this awful aggression. I support them.

10.30 am

Lord Newby (LD): My Lords, only six months ago we were describing the chaotic retreat from Afghanistan as the biggest failure of western foreign policy for decades.

[LORD NEWBY]

That was a fair description, but the Russian invasion of Ukraine tops it because the invasion is not simply a success of Russian military strength but is an equal, collective failure of the West to recognise that Putin was pursuing an aggressive, forward foreign policy which was aimed not just at those territories which he wished to control but at the values of democracy and the rule of law that they embody and the subsequent failure on our part to take measures to counter that.

This invasion follows other Russian power grabs in Crimea, Georgia and Moldova and increasing Russian influence more broadly in the Middle East and Africa. These advances have simply not been met with a serious western response. Afghanistan and Ukraine must now impel the UK to reassess its place in the world and the extent to which it is prepared to make an effort to promote its values against those who aggressively reject them. This is not going to be accomplished quickly, but we if are to avoid future Ukraines, future Afghanistans, we need to start this reassessment urgently now.

I shall suggest today just four areas for consideration. First, we need to be realistic about Britain's strengths and weaknesses. We are not a global military power, despite the Government's hubristic rhetoric. The pivot to the east was a major strategic mistake and should be reversed. So was the decision to cut the number of troops. Those cuts should also be reversed.

Secondly, our most important security and economic relationships are with Europe. Windy talk of global Britain cuts no ice when the Russians can seize a friendly European democracy. Post Brexit, the UK has not been part of European, non-NATO discussions on security and foreign policy. We have not, for example, been in the room as the rest of Europe has planned its sanctions against Russia. We have been devoid of influence and have not been able to use our weight to help stiffen the resolve of those who have doubts about taking a firm line. We need to find some mechanism for being a full participant in European policy-making and civilian security and defence policy.

Thirdly, we need to strengthen global structures and programmes which promote our values. With Russia and China on the Security Council, this is not going to be easy, but we should at the very least do what we can within our own powers and resources to begin to address this. Reinstating the cuts to development assistance would be an easy start.

Fourthly, we should set an example in the way in which our leaders behave. We should be principled, honest, knowledgeable and robust. That is how you gain respect and influence. I realise that it is completely impossible to contemplate this under this Government, but we remain a democracy, and this Government will in due course be replaced.

All these issues will take time to work through, but we are faced with immediate challenges today. We had a full discussion of sanctions on the Statement yesterday, and I will not reprise the arguments I made then, but I ask the Minister to respond to reports in the press today that the otherwise inexplicable reason why we have not named Gazprom and Rosneft as well as oligarchs such as Roman Abramovich as subject to sanctions is

that we do not have the legal resources to fight any challenge which they might bring. Can the Minister assure me that this is not the case and that these entities and individuals will now, as they should be, be sanctioned?

Sanctions deal with Russian involvement in our economy, but there are also outstanding issues related to possible Russian involvement in our politics. As the noble Lord, Lord Collins, said, the Government have been woefully slow, and indeed negligent, in failing to act on the recommendations of the *Russia* report. Can the Minister give the House an assurance that they will now be pursued with vigour and, in particular, will the Government release any evidence they have of Russian interference in British politics whether or not they deem it to have been successful?

One of the most predictable results of the invasion is that there will be large numbers of refugees. What is the UK's position on this? We understand that British troops have been sent to Poland to help with the evacuation of Ukrainian citizens. What part do we intend to play in their resettlement? All Ukrainian citizens will be allowed to enter the EU on a Ukrainian passport. Will they be similarly allowed to enter the UK? In particular, can the Government confirm that they will allow family reunion for Ukrainian citizens who have relatives in the UK and are fleeing the country? Will the Government also consider granting visas to Ukrainians who are working for UK companies in Ukraine, often in tech-related roles, who might now wish to come to live and work here?

Finally, can we have more clarity on what the Government plan to do to support our NATO allies in eastern Europe? We were told yesterday that two fighters were being despatched to Cyprus to patrol NATO's south-eastern borders. This is welcome, but surely it is not enough. The next potential targets for Putin are the Baltic states. Nobody thinks he is going to invade them tomorrow, but surely we now need to provide them with much more military support. The Estonians, I know, are extremely grateful for the British-led contingent of 1,200 NATO troops who are now stationed their border with Russia, but they are under no illusion that they are anything more than a tripwire and would be rapidly swept aside in the event of any Russian advance. The noble Baroness, Lady Goldie, referred to this in her speech, but in winding up will the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, give more details of exactly what is now planned in terms of reinforcing those troops and what plans NATO might have for reinforcing its equally small contingents in the other Baltic states?

As a young man I visited Voroshilovgrad, now renamed Luhansk, as leader of the first ever British youth delegation to Russia following the signing of the Helsinki agreement. The noble Lord, Lord Pickles, was also a member of the delegation. It was a notable period. In Luhansk, we stayed in a hotel built by German prisoners of war. Grim history was all around us, but we, and our Russian interlocutors, genuinely believed that we were at the start of a process which would mean that wars in Europe were a thing of the past. It therefore makes me weep today to see what is happening in Luhansk. We must deal as best we can with today's tragedy in Ukraine, but we must also make sure that it does not become the model for future tragedies.

10.38 am

The Archbishop of York: My Lords, noble Lords may have seen that my most reverend friend the Archbishop of Canterbury and I have already spoken about the unprovoked attack on Ukraine as a great act of evil. This is indeed a dark hour for Europe. We have called on Anglican churches to make this coming Sunday a day of prayer for peace and on Tuesday encourage parishes to join the Anglican diocese in Europe in prayer at 6 pm, especially for those who minister and witness for peace in Ukraine itself, where we have chaplaincies and minister alongside other denominations and faith communities. We are all invited to join Pope Francis in making Ash Wednesday—next Wednesday—a day of fasting and prayer for peace.

Perhaps in the West we have taken peace for granted. The horrors being visited on Ukraine must be a wake-up call for us that peace is something you need to work at. What is happening in Ukraine is truly shocking but, sadly, it is not surprising. We have seen it coming. Ukraine now stands alone, unprotected by the treaties that protect us and allow us to believe that peace is a normal state of affairs—but it is not. Peace is a choice, a decision that we make each day about the way we live and about our responsibilities to and with our neighbour, be that in our family, in our community or between the nations of the world. We need the policies, the wisdom, the tenacity and the international resolve that will deliver it.

Previous generations knew this, because they had experienced the horrors of war that most of us have not. In the post-war period, we invested in international bodies and associations that would bind us to each other. For instance, French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman said in 1950, when announcing a plan to pool coal and steel production, that its motivation was that “solidarity in production” would make

“war between France and Germany ... not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible.”

But Ukraine is not defended by NATO. What we have seen from Vladimir Putin in the last few days is a terrible, flagrant disregard of the Ukrainian people’s legitimate right to self-determination. As the noble Baroness, Lady Goldie, put it, he has chosen war.

Right now, as well as generous humanitarian aid and support for refugees, about which I hope the Minister will say more when summing up, we need to know what is happening. We must use all our diplomatic muscle and energy, stringent economic sanctions and focused political will to force Russia to step back from this aggression, withdraw its troops and silence its guns—not least because effective sanctions will mean that many innocent Russians suffer as well. Our actions must be swift and cohesive if they are to be decisive.

Jesus urged His followers to be peacemakers, not simply peace lovers. This is an important distinction because it is a call to action, first in support of Ukraine and especially the many innocent children and families—potential refugees living with this conflict and its consequences—and of those who are bravely protesting on the streets of Russia. But lasting peace requires more. It requires a new commitment to international instruments of law and order, accountability and investment, so that we make peace—not just hope to keep it.

The suffering of Ukraine, the imperialist ambition of Russia and our own acceptance of that immoral flood of corrupt money that flows from Russia through London have to stop. As followers of Jesus, we are praying about this because, yes, we believe that God’s grace will have the final word—not the horrors of sin and not death—but also because that prayer will shape our will and our resolve. Therefore, the prayers of Christian people and all people of faith and good will are with our Government and all the leaders of the free world as we implore Russia to change course. We are also determined to play our part in the active pursuit of peace in our world today.

10.43 am

Lord Howell of Guildford (Con): My Lords, like others, I greatly look forward to the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, in this debate.

It seems generally agreed that the Prime Minister’s speech on sanctions yesterday was a fine one, as was Keir Starmer’s. This package of sanctions now, although massive, will not be enough. More will clearly be needed—of all kinds; not just financial but on control of supply chains.

It is also fairly clear—to me, anyway—that Mr Putin is losing some of his grip on reality, which is extremely dangerous, with his rambling speech to his people and his threat of consequences never experienced before in history, which seems to come very near to implying the use of tactical nuclear weapons. This really is moving out of the realm of sane and rational calculation. It is said that Mr Putin is supposed to be a very religious man, but I see nothing religious at all in what he is now doing in Ukraine.

I remain concerned about one key aspect of our stance and the western stance. Too many people seem to talk about this as a European crisis, when of course it is actually an Asian crisis and a wider world crisis, not just a NATO matter or a replay of the Cold War and 20th-century East-West confrontation. The world has changed totally since then. Although obviously we need a united NATO—I hope Germany can be kept on board despite the pressures on it about gas—we need a wider unity than that. I slightly disagree with the noble Lord, Lord Newby, about that point.

People keep forgetting that Russia is half an Asian nation. It really is essential to co-ordinate all trading, business and supply chain sanctions with the major Asian players. I was very glad to see the Foreign Secretary speaking today, apparently, not just to Australia, India, Malaysia and Japan but even to China, the other great Asian power. They are so clearly all threatened by a new world war as much as the rest of us—indeed, even more so because that is where all their growth will be in future and war would undermine it.

Britain should be able to use all our Asian and Commonwealth connections to make a real contribution on this front. If all our sanctions are simply neutered by major Asian economies carrying on business as usual with Russia, western sanctions will have very little deterrent effect on Mr Putin, frankly. I suspect he probably calculated that before he embarked on all this. I was very glad to hear the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, a former Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office,

[LORD HOWELL OF GUILDFORD]

make this very point about our world involvement on the “Today” programme on the radio yesterday. It seems the message is really getting through on that vital point.

My second concern is that the crisis should be a real wake-up call on the need for this country to have a proper energy security policy. Russian gas via Ukraine has not yet been cut off, but it will be at any moment. When it is, all gas prices—which are already crucifying us—will soar ahead even further. Because we import so much gas, not necessarily from Russia but from world markets, and use so much for our electricity—much too much—we will be hit very hard again. There is no reason at all why this nation should not be able to regain a full energy security and food security policy, despite all the past colossal errors. We should have a clear plan and a strategy for doing so as from now. One final hopeful outcome that one looks for in this horror could be that, if we play this right, we will want neither Russia’s gas nor its oil. It can keep them. I hope that at least that message will get through.

10.48 am

Lord Robertson of Port Ellen (Lab): My Lords, there is an old saying: in Russia, everything changes in 20 years and nothing changes in 200 years. It maybe gets to the heart of the recent crisis, when the unthinkable has become the inevitable.

Over the last few weeks I have been wondering, with the rest of the world, what is inside the head of the man who has, on his own, ordered the violent invasion of a sovereign nation state in this year 2022; whom I met nine times in the Kremlin and in Brussels; with whom I did good business and with whom we created the 20-strong NATO-Russia Council, with Russia as an equal at that table; who personally signed accords guaranteeing the right of nations, and Ukraine specifically, to choose their own

“inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security, the inviolability of borders”;

and who asked me about when we were going to invite Russia to join NATO.

So I ask this today: what irrational thought process has changed that man into the monster who violates the sovereignty—indeed, the existence—of a neighbouring country? What changed that man of the KGB, who this week publicly humiliated the head of his own foreign intelligence service in the full sight of a dismayed world? The answer to many people, and widely accepted, is that he is paranoid about next-door Ukraine becoming a member of NATO. I disagree. I do not think that the organisation that I used to head is the fuel on the Putin fire; it is just a useful demon to scare the Russian public. His real and well-justified fear is of democracy. He has seen how the aspiration of former Communist countries to join the European Union changes these countries permanently and fundamentally. The EU is, in fact, the bogey.

Nations becoming democracies, with a free press, free elections, the rule of law and mixed economies, are a serious challenge to the Putin model of brutal authoritarianism. In his fevered mind, if Ukraine travels in that direction, as indeed it wants to do, then what about the rising revolts in Belarus, Armenia, Kazakhstan

and Azerbaijan? It is getting, for him, much too close to home. This attack—this breach of international law and of the UN Charter, this heavy-handed assault on a fellow Slavic nation—is actually a sign of weakness, of vulnerability in the face of an inexorable tide of democracy.

So what do we do now? First, we stand absolutely firm and resolute with the Ukrainian people. Secondly, we should finance and supply the resistance to these invaders—make Ukraine the new Afghanistan for Russia. Thirdly, we must build our own defences, protect our own democratic values and imprint in the mind of Putin and his generals the inviolability of the Article 5 guarantee, and the danger to their motherland if they ever thought of crossing that line. Fourthly, we must mobilise the whole world against this outrage and make sure that the sanctions bite savagely and affect the Kremlin’s thinking.

Finally, I remind the House of what President Putin said in May 2002, standing beside me in Rome at the NATO-Russia summit. He said this:

“Russia always had a crucial role in world affairs. The problem for our country has been, however, that over a very long period of time a situation arose in which Russia was on one side and the other side was ... the rest of the world.”

He continued:

“Nothing good came of that confrontation between us and the rest of the world.”

These were wise words in 2002; they are even more true today.

10.53 am

Lord Sedwill (CB) (Maiden Speech): My Lords, I thank your Lordships for permitting me to make my maiden speech in a debate of such seriousness. I hope noble Lords will understand if I do not go through the usual personal reminiscences that are customary on such an occasion and use my time to focus on the issue at hand. But let me start with one: I was a junior diplomat in training when the Berlin Wall came down, and I was on duty the weekend that Saddam Hussein’s Iraq invaded Kuwait. I am haunted by those experiences right at the beginning of my career as we face a much more serious challenge today.

For the reasons that the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, has set out, we must take Vladimir Putin at his word. Many thought that he hoped to consolidate Crimea, to intimidate Ukraine and to re-establish the Moscow-Washington channel as the only means of dialogue about European and wider security—but he does not. He wants to reverse the outcome of the Cold War, for the reasons that several noble Lords have set out, and we must assume and act in accordance with that.

I suggest that there are three things that we should do, beyond the measures that the Government, along with our allies, have already taken. I commend the Government for the robust stance that they have taken throughout this crisis, blending diplomacy with defence and strong action on sanctions. The key to sanctions is to impose a higher price than was expected by the offender in the first place. We did that after Salisbury; we must do so again now. Much of what we have seen so far will have been priced in by the Putin regime. For the reasons that we have heard, we should go further, not only with economic sanctions but, for example,

dismantling the intelligence networks around the world on which Russia depends—which we dismantled after the Salisbury attack but many others did not. We can provide other countries with the material that they need to do that.

We should also attack the Putin regime on exactly the point that the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, just made: its fear of its own people. When the regime gets bogged down in Ukraine, as is likely, it is important that we reveal the truth to Russia's own people as well as to other countries that are in play. We should do that through all of the classic means, such as the media, the BBC World Service, Russian-speaking services and so on, but through modern means as well—cyber, social media and information campaigns of the kind that the regime uses against us. One of the only heartening things that we have seen in this very sorry episode was the speedy resistance of some brave Russians to the actions of their Government; we need to encourage that as well.

We must support the Ukrainian resistance with the military and other capabilities that they need as their resistance to the Russian invasion shifts from conventional to unconventional, from military to militia. It is really important that our intelligence services and others have not only the capabilities but the legal frameworks to do so; we have struggled with that in other conflicts elsewhere.

Finally, as the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, said, we must ensure that NATO itself is ready for the next phase. For too long—for the whole period of my career since the fall of the Berlin Wall—we have assumed that the “new world order”, as the first President Bush referred to it, was something on which we could rely and globalisation something we could take for granted. It is now clear that we cannot, so, as well as deploying additional forces to reassure the eastern European nations that NATO will stand by them—that Article 5 is an absolute guarantee covering not only every inch of territory but any cyberattacks or other kinds of unconventional warfare that they might face—NATO must also reaffirm its intention to modernise and deter further Russian aggression. That means every nation not only meeting but exceeding the 2% and quickly putting in place programmes to achieve a proper, integrated NATO capability that can be deployed against Russia or any other adversary, and working through some of the fractiousness that, my word, looks trivial now, between NATO, the EU and other headquarters as they try to try to address those capabilities.

My final point is this: other autocrats are clearly watching us very carefully, as we have heard already, and some of them have territorial ambitions too, but not every authoritarian state, or every state that does not share our democratic values, will be comfortable with what they have seen of Russia trying to breach the borders of another country. Therefore, our diplomacy must encompass those states as well and encourage the collective international response to a breach of not just the rules-based order but the global rule of law.

10.59 am

Lord Ricketts (CB): My Lords, it is a real pleasure to follow my noble friend Lord Sedwill and be the first to congratulate him on his powerful and eloquent maiden speech—a really important contribution to

this very serious debate today. The whole House has seen in one shot the expertise and wisdom that he brings to our debates. He has been a colleague and friend for many years. I think I can say that he is the number one crisis diplomat from the Foreign Office ranks, with his expertise in Iraq and the fact that he was UK ambassador to Afghanistan and then the NATO civilian representative there. His arrival in this House greatly strengthens the small Bench of former national security advisers here and the slightly larger bench of former Cabinet Secretaries. Indeed, he held both jobs simultaneously for a while, which is quite a feat; I held one and it was more than enough for me. The House has really gained from my noble friend's presence and we look forward to many more such powerful speeches in future.

Putin's invasion of Ukraine takes Europe back to the darkest days of the last century. It poses a fundamental threat to the system of international rules that the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, and many others here today spent their careers, as I did, trying to enforce. It has profound implications for peace and security on our continent. I want to make two brief points today. The first is my assessment of what may well now happen in Ukraine, and the second is how the West can respond at a level that matches the seriousness of the horrors that Putin is inflicting on the continent.

First, western intelligence agencies are to be congratulated on calling this right. They have been warning us that Putin intended to mount a full-scale invasion—to some scepticism, to begin with. I think the West was absolutely right in trying to pursue a dual track of diplomacy and deterrence to try to prevent this happening. Both those courses failed but probably nothing would have prevented Putin going ahead.

I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, that Putin has decided that his legacy must be a buffer zone of weak vassal states surrounding Russia, and that Ukraine, as a vibrant, democratic country, presented a real threat to his vision. We therefore have to be clear that his objective is to overthrow the current Government in Kyiv and replace it with a pro-Russian regime. I think he will try to achieve that by encircling Kyiv rather than by street-to-street fighting, but I think he will do whatever it takes now that he has taken this gamble of throwing everything into Ukraine. The Ukrainian army is fighting valiantly but in the end it cannot prevail against the full might of Russian aggression, so we have to steel ourselves for all this to be accompanied by the round-up and internment of many thousands of patriotic Ukrainians and the whole dismal apparatus of repression, military police, informers and the knock on the door at midnight. That is what will be happening in Europe, on our continent, in the days ahead.

Assuming that Putin achieves that objective, I think that is when his problems then start. In order to keep a quisling Government in power in Ukraine, I do not see how he has any alternative but to maintain hundreds of thousands of Russian troops in Ukraine for the indefinite future, tied down and suffering casualties from the guerrilla fighting that will then follow. There are many risks for him there, as other noble Lords have said. This war is not supported by Russian public opinion. When the body bags start coming back in

[LORD RICKETTS]

serious numbers, it will be remembered that it was Putin alone who took the decision and he will carry the responsibility for it. In the end, I am sure that Russia and Putin will be the losers from this gamble.

What can the West do to increase the cost of Putin's decision? I agree entirely with what noble Lords have said: we must clearly now strengthen the sanctions regime as far as possible. I support what has already been announced on detaching Russia from the western financial system and the benefits of technology and markets in the West. Clearly, we must reinforce NATO's eastern member states against the risk of spillover or miscalculation. I do not think Putin intends to attack NATO but there is always the risk of miscalculation.

Then we must find the stamina to sustain these measures for years and, potentially, decades. Too often, sanctions regimes erode fairly rapidly. We must not let that happen on this occasion. We need new mechanisms, as we had during the Cold War, to ensure that co-ordination, and we will need to review our own national security policies. As the noble Lord, Lord Howell, has said, this is now a global issue and we ought to be mobilising a global coalition of support for the international rules that are so important to us.

For the US, that means accepting that China is not the overriding priority and that a strong US presence in Europe and leadership in NATO are vital for American interests. For the EU, it means increased defence spending and years of investment to wean EU countries off dependence on Russian energy. Britain has played a leading part in the crisis management so far and I welcome that, but there is still more to do to prevent London being a safe haven for corrupt Russian money. There is one obvious gap in our foreign policy management, and that is structured co-operation with the EU. That needs to be corrected urgently.

For Putin, the security of Russia depends on the insecurity of the rest of Europe. That is not a doctrine that we can allow to succeed.

11.05 am

Lord Campbell of Pittenweem (LD): My Lords, it is always a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, who brings to the table the twin virtues of knowledge and experience. So too does the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, who made an outstanding maiden speech, upon which I congratulate him. I, and I am sure the House as a whole, very much look forward to his contributions in future.

I find it hard to find language consistent with the conventions of this House to condemn adequately the behaviour of Mr Putin, those who tolerate him, those who support him and those who implement his policies. One expression in particular has caused me a considerable sense of distaste, and that is the suggestion that his purpose is the "denazification" of Ukraine. Mr Putin is the political descendant of those who signed the Ribbentrop pact, and the military descendant of those who sat on their hands across the river while the Nazis destroyed the Warsaw ghetto and everyone in it.

The truth, as we know, is that it was never about NATO membership or any threat to Russia; those were convenient sideshows that brought representatives

of three permanent members of the Security Council almost as supplicants to the court of Mr Putin. It was only after their deception that the truth was revealed. It was and is about Russia and Putin. It is about the restoration of empire and the reputational reward for the would-be emperor, finally revealed in a 5,000-word essay and in a lengthy and at times, frankly, incoherent speech. We are told that Ukraine is part of Russia, created by Lenin; I wonder if Lenin understood that this would be attributed to him some years later. We are told that it is not a nation in its own right. Then why is it a member of the United Nations? We are told that its inhabitants are Russians masquerading as Europeans, with the assistance of a malign NATO and an equally unhelpful EU, who must be encouraged to return to the fold and brought back to the bosom of Mother Russia. "And how will we do it?" asks Mr Putin. "We will do it with helicopter gunships, cruise missiles and heavy armour."

The truth is that what we are seeing is a new doctrine. Indeed, Mr Putin claims that it is a new doctrine: he calls it "peacekeeping", and it is of such intellectual integrity that it has acquired the endorsement of President Trump. But we should also appreciate that that doctrine has already been refined in the intervention in Georgia, in the annexation of Crimea, in support of independence for the Donbass, and by being an unhelpful supporter of those who are antagonistic to the Dayton agreement in the settlement of Bosnia.

The truth is that we are witnessing a form of 21st-century colonialism. It involves destruction, it certainly involves death and it involves the displacement of citizens. But the problem for us is that Mr Putin will not be satisfied. Like *Oliver Twist*, he will want more, and Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia may be thought by him to be easy pickings, not least because of the advantage of the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad being so close geographically. These, of course, are members of NATO and are entitled to the protection of Article 5. If it gets to that, in NATO we will need professionalism, leadership and a unity of purpose—perhaps greater than has ever been required of the alliance. I leave your Lordships with this thought: sanctions will not be sufficient.

11.10 am

Lord Robathan (Con): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Campbell. I particularly agree with what he has just said about NATO. It is also a pleasure to congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, on his excellent and extremely thoughtful speech.

War in Europe is something my parents and grandparents knew. How would they have felt now? We have been a lucky generation: no war—or no war like this, anyway. My son is a 25 year-old in the Army; God willing, he will not have to fight.

Putin banned me in 2015 for saying some disobliging things about him in the Commons—similar to what I shall say today, in fact. I now view that as a badge of honour, although I still want to go to St Petersburg. He and I are the same age, and, in 1968, I was a 17 year-old climbing in Austria when the Soviet Union invaded Austria's neighbour, Czechoslovakia. I suspect that the lesson he learned was that tanks work; I learned that one needs to carry a big stick to defend oneself.

Ten years later, I was one of 55,000 British troops facing east against the Soviet hordes who were threatening western Europe.

In the last two decades, the dictator has been strengthening his position and his forces, and the West has been pusillanimous in the extreme. In 2006, not one mile from here, his agents poisoned Litvinenko with polonium. In 2008, he invaded Georgia—what did the West do when Abkhazia and South Ossetia were taken over? In 2014, he annexed Crimea and, of course, supported separatists in eastern Ukraine, where there has been a war for eight years. In 2014, a Russian Buk missile shot down Malaysia Airlines flight 17, and 298 people were killed—it was probably fired either with or by Russian soldiers. What did the West do? Well, in February of that year, we all attended the Sochi Winter Olympics. In 2018, he used a nerve agent on our streets, in Salisbury, and, since then, he has attempted the murder of Navalny. What did the West do? The tyrant, Stalin's successor, has tested our resolve and found us wanting.

So what should we do now? I congratulate the Government on the sanctions imposed so far. No one wants World War III with a nuclear-armed state, but we first have to have real personal sanctions. In 1990, personal property hardly existed in communist states, yet 10 years later there were billionaires. I am sure that many of those people made their way with hard work, but a lot of them were gangsters and crooks. So pass emergency, perhaps time-limited, legislation to allow us to freeze all assets. We cannot freeze the yachts in Saint-Tropez or the skiing chalets in the Alps, but we can freeze estates in the Cotswolds, penthouses in Knightsbridge and football clubs. Look into how the money was earned: it was mostly stolen from the Russian people.

The second thing is further, very real, economic sanctions: no buying of oil and gas from Russia and no dodgy shell companies in British Overseas Territories. It will be pain for us and all of our allies; we will feel it all. At the very least, we will have higher energy prices and power cuts. I congratulate Germany on stopping the Nord Stream 2 pipeline—late—but it must go further. It will hurt us, but perhaps it will undermine Putin with his crooked cronies and with the Russian people.

The third thing is rearmament. For decades, we have been enjoying the peace dividend, yet when there are floods or anything like what is happening today, we say, "Send in the troops". "Which one?" is the answer. We no longer have regiments of tanks and armoured personnel carriers to defend Europe. We no longer have squadrons of fast jets to deter invasion. We recently spent a fortune on protection equipment—PPE—which may or may not have worked. We now need to spend rather more on protecting ourselves against a very real threat. We need to stop the absurd cuts, as has already been mentioned today. I am delighted to say that, yesterday, I spoke to Sir Edward Davey, who said that he had been calling for this for some time—I am surprised but delighted. The dictator laughs at us. We make strong statements and then cut our defences.

As has been mentioned, we made attempts to understand his fears over NATO but it was all nonsense. Like all bullies, he senses our weakness; he laughs his

socks off as we gaze at our navels and emote about transgender issues. I read—I do not know whether it is true—that the National Security Adviser, Stephen Lovegrove, the successor of two noble Lords here, issued a document about white privilege and how we must not use the word "strong".

The dictator senses our weakness and a total lack of confidence in our society, as we do not stand up to the yobbos ripping down statues or idiots gluing themselves to roads. He sees that we have no confidence or belief in our own values, as we pander to Extinction Rebellion. I have been banging on for 10 years about climate change—remind me how the Moscow branch is doing. We need to pass legislation so that our courts and liberal values are not used against us, as has been happening in libel cases here, particularly with Catherine Belton, who wrote *Putin's People*.

You can take analogies only so far, but my right honourable friend the Defence Secretary is right. In 1938, Hitler told Chamberlain that his final demand would be the Sudetenland, because there were a lot of German speakers there. Obviously, appeasement brought peace in our time, but actually, it brought war. The Government have shown resolve—too late, after two or three decades since the end of the Cold War—and now we must do more and ignore the siren voices and appeasers. The future of the United Kingdom, Europe and indeed the world is under threat. We need to regain our belief in ourselves and our values. We need to stand up for those values and for the people of Ukraine.

11.17 am

Lord West of Spithead (Lab): My Lords, I intend to focus on just one issue, but I first join the praise for the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, whom I have known for a number of years. I thank him for his very good speech, which of course shows his great experience in a whole raft of areas.

Here we are. There is a war in Europe now. Russia has invaded Ukraine. It is the most ghastly act—a number of speakers have said how unacceptable it is—but it is a war. Generally, when there is a war and an expectation that possibly there might be more war, there is quite a focus on spending in the military. There has been almost no talk from the Government about enhancement of spending on the military. None of us wants to have a greater war, but it is clearly a possibility. I find it extraordinary.

I hope that, even as we are speaking, contracts are going out within the Ministry of Defence to fill up the shortfalls that we have across our defence forces. There is no doubt that we have shortages of weapon stocks. We have weapons that have not been brought up to the right sort of state and there has not been the maintenance that is needed and required. This is because we have steadily cut our defence forces over a number of years, which has not been unnoticed by Putin and other dictators—people pay regard to this. He has built up an idea that, in the West—in our own country but particularly in Europe—people were not willing to stand up for and, if necessary, actually fight for what they believed in. Putin drew that conclusion, and you cannot blame him when you look at the dearth of spending on defence across the EU—the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, touched on this and mentioned that we must strengthen our military.

[LORD WEST OF SPITHEAD]

As I say, I really hope that, as well as sanctions, which are great—they should be as vicious as possible, as we need to show Russia that this is unacceptable—we are spending, and sorting out problems and strengthening the military as we speak. The problem in defence is always that it takes time to make a major change—that was what we all said over the last years, when things were being cut—but, my goodness, we absolutely have to do this because, as has been said by a number of speakers, we must reinforce NATO within the eastern European NATO countries, which are relying on us. They joined NATO because they liked Article 5. They knew that Russia was still a threat—they have always seen that—and we absolutely have to reinforce the NATO forces that are there.

A number of speakers have mentioned this already: at one time, we would have been able to put an armoured division into somewhere like that. Now, however, we would find it very difficult to provide an armoured brigade: that is the state we have got to. So we really must spend some money on defence.

Why do we need to reinforce those eastern European NATO countries? The reason is that we must show Putin that if he does anything in those regions, there will be a fight—and it needs to be a fight that can be at a conventional level: otherwise, the nuclear tripwire is too low, and that is a horrifying thought. As my noble friend Lord Robertson also mentioned, I saw the speeches that Putin made to his nation. I must say that he has always been an unpleasant and nasty man, but I used to think there was a certain rationality to him. That gave me the impression that he was unbalanced, and the last thing you want is someone unbalanced in control of a country that has major nuclear weapons and who has spoken loosely about them. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Howell, that Putin's statement was in effect saying, "You watch out, I've got a nuclear weapon". We know that his policy of de-escalation is to fire a nuclear weapon. What an extraordinary and terrifying prospect. So we must reinforce our military and make sure that it is strong enough, and we must get into eastern Europe to show that we have that will. I hope that, by those means, this will not extend any further. However, I must say that I am very worried about this. We must start thinking about enhancing our military and, in the future, looking at 3% on defence—that would give a strong message. We are in a different and very dangerous world.

11.21 am

Lord Alton of Liverpool (CB): I join with others in welcoming my noble friend Lord Sedwill and his remarkable, notable and distinguished maiden speech.

Yesterday during a meeting, the Ukrainian ambassador described to me fighting in the government district of Kyiv as President Zelensky continued to work from his office. What more can the Minister tell us about the safety of President Zelensky, his family and his Cabinet—and, if necessary, about providing a place of safety for a Government in exile?

I will say something about justice and the rule of law. On 1 July 2019, Ukraine recognised the International Criminal Court and, in 2020, signed the Rome statute.

It has made two special ad hoc declarations under Article 12(3) of the statute, giving the ICC jurisdiction over crimes perpetrated on its territories from November 2013 onward. First, the Maidan demonstrations and, after later events, the prosecutor's preliminary examination concluded that there was a reasonable basis to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity had already been committed. Yesterday, we saw why the ICC should now take urgent next steps, requesting authorisation from the Pre-Trial Chamber to investigate Putin's invasion and his contempt for the rule of law. Impunity for previous crimes simply begets further crime.

The ICC is a court of last resort. The Government's law officers should urgently liaise with the prosecutor about prioritising the case of Ukraine and requesting authorisation to investigate, and ultimately prosecute, the perpetrators. Unlike a referral via the Security Council, such an action could not be vetoed by Russia. The evidence of such crimes is written across the scarred face of a woman on the front pages of our newspapers today whose apartment in Kyiv was bombed yesterday. Russia's military and political leaders must be put on notice that they, and the members of the Russian Duma who voted for this act of aggression, need to know that, in addition to welcome economic sanctions, their future ability to travel to any of the 123 countries which have ratified the Rome statute will leave them open to arrest and being brought to justice.

Then there is the question of self-defence. I was shocked by reports that Estonia was stopped by Germany from sending munitions to Ukraine over its territory. Notwithstanding its welcome decision on Nord Stream 2, when one NATO country stops another NATO country from assisting in self-defence and upholding liberty and democracy, what does that say about our unity and shared values as an alliance? As the noble Lord, Lord Campbell, said, NATO has kept the peace and is not an instrument for territorial conquest. Putin, not NATO, is the aggressor, and Ukraine shows that NATO must be recalibrated and united for these dangerous times.

The US has 35,000 troops defending 400 million Europeans, who themselves have a \$21 trillion economy. The US pays 75% of NATO's costs. The UK, to its credit, meets 2% of the NATO contribution. It is high time that Germany and the others did the same. We, too, must carefully recalibrate and reconsider the cuts to our armed forces—to which the noble Lord, Lord West, and others, referred—our strategic deficiencies, about which my noble and gallant friend Lord Stirrup has written this week, and our overdependency on hostile actors.

In 1989, we celebrated the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Iron Curtain. We do not need another one. Yesterday, we saw thousands of people carrying backpacks and dragging suitcases to the Ukrainian border following Putin's invasion—wickedly adding to the 82 million people who are already displaced or refugees in the world today. There are predictions of 5 million more displacements. Poland alone is preparing to receive up to 1 million refugees. The UNHCR has warned of "devastating humanitarian consequences". Putin and Lukashenko cynically use refugees as cannon fodder. What are we doing to open safe routes and contain this human catastrophe?

Finally, I have never forgotten the sheer courage and determination of pro-democracy activists whom I met on the streets of Lviv in 1989 as they risked their lives to throw off the shackles and chains of the Soviet Union. I met people who had spent most of two decades in Soviet prisons and families who had, in the previous generation, lost loved ones to Stalin's Holodomor: the man-made famine that convulsed Ukraine from 1932 to 1933 and led to millions of deaths. Paradoxically, today many countries—especially in the Maghreb and Middle East—rely on Ukrainian wheat to feed their people. How will we deal with that? As other noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Collins, have said, what will we do to ensure that the truth—often usually the first casualty in the fog of war—is heard via the BBC World Service and social media? In 1989, Ukraine began to replace pain with hope. In inflicting more pain, Putin outrageously suggests that Ukraine never existed and should no longer exist. However long it takes, we must prove him wrong.

11.27 am

Lord King of Bridgwater (Con): My Lords, I am particularly pleased to follow the noble Lord, Lord Alton, who spoke with passion of his particular interests and involvement in Ukraine. The maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, has also brought out very clearly the value of this debate today. He started his career with the Berlin Wall and the Iron Curtain, at a time when I myself also had some slight involvement. This is not the moment to discuss the organisation or constitution of our country, but the Commons had a very valuable debate that showed a considerable degree of unity at this time, and the value of your Lordships' House—which we have already heard today and will continue to hear in further speeches to follow—is the quality of experience that can be brought to bear, and the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, spelled this out admirably. His was a speech that could never have been made by a current Member of Parliament, but it brought real authority to what he had to contribute to this House.

I look back on my own experiences with the Soviet Union during the time of Margaret Thatcher. I remember her describing President Gorbachev as:

“A man I could do business with!”

I do not think that President Biden or President Macron would say the same about the current occupant of that office. He is a man who has now become a completely new dimension of international pariah. I think I am right in saying that the only person who has sent a message of support to Putin for the actions he has taken is Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

The first lesson that I draw out of this is that, after the awfulness of the current situation and invasion, we have had—as the noble Lord, Lord West, said—the clearest possible warning to NATO to wake up and to understand. It has been given an absolute demonstration of what it could face in the Baltic states and others and of the range of an attack that could be developed, not just by conventional military but by the whole new world of cyber, hacking and different threats and disorganisation—which is clearly an important part at the moment of the whole Russian attack.

This is all going on in an incredibly dangerous world. It would have been almost inconceivable at the start of the pandemic for anyone to think that, in the middle of a pandemic, when every country in the world is facing that threat, we would find military action of this kind. The world is facing not just the pandemic. We see the number of failed nation states that there are presently; the mass migration of people; the global scale of the refugee challenge; and—as the noble Lord, Lord Alton, mentioned—famine threatening so many parts of the world. I understand that Yemen, which is threatened with the most severe famine, is in fact a customer of Ukraine corn and is dependent on part of the Ukrainian harvests. All those dimensions together emphasise the importance of the calling of this debate, which your Lordships' House has illustrated so well.

The challenge that we now face is to ensure that the response, not just from the West but globally, is of total world outrage. I agree very much with what my noble friend Lord Howell referred to: it is not just the West, but the East and Pacific countries as well. Everybody must stand up and make quite clear, not just to President Putin but to many Russian people, who will be horrified—many have already shown their horror at what is happening—that Russia will become an international pariah under his leadership and that this invasion must be stopped. International pressure must be brought in every possible way in every possible country that is able to contribute to ensure that the earliest possible relief can come to the brave people of Ukraine. We must then establish much stronger international support for the forces of democratic defence that we need at this time.

11.32 am

Lord Anderson of Swansea (Lab): My Lords, I join with the noble Lord, Lord King, and the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, in his admirable maiden speech, in calling for a global response.

We are in dark days, the like of which we thought we would not see again in our time. My theme is simple: the current invasion was predictable—indeed, it was predicted—and much of it depended on the gullibility of the western response. So far as the predictability is concerned, much of that has been said by the noble Lord, Lord Robathan. On the Russian domestic side, I just mention Magnitsky, Navalny and the blows to the freedom of the press. Abroad, we of course had Skripal in Salisbury and the invasions of Georgia in 2008 and Crimea in 2014. It was predicted. Indeed, looking back, historians will see the triumph in particular of US intelligence in predicting what would happen: the incremental deceit, step by step leading to the actual invasion.

Then we have the question of the nature of President Putin—once a member of the KGB, always a member of the KGB. I was in the foreign service in the 1960s and I recall that there was no Soviet speech possible without talking about revanchist West Germany and about the encirclement of the Soviet Union. Putin mentioned Nazis in respect of Ukraine, which was an echo of the 1960s. Of course, he had the humiliation of Yeltsin and Gorbachev, and Monday's speech spoke volumes of his nature. Where will it end? Putin has not actually declared his war aims. The minimalist aim is surely the water supply of Crimea and the Mariupol

[LORD ANDERSON OF SWANSEA]

corridor; the maximum is the restructuring of the whole of the security architecture of Europe according to his will.

All this has been aided by the West, which has given Putin the benefit of every doubt. President Macron talked about being deceived—surprise, surprise. To turn the spotlight on the UK, we have allowed so much Russian gold to come in; I congratulate Mr Tugendhat on the Foreign Affairs Committee in the other place. Let us look also at our overseas territories, which are a gap that has not yet been filled. Yet Russia is relatively weak. On analysis, I do not accept what some Americans tell me about Russia being only “a gas station with nukes”; it has a powerful military but, overall, it is still relatively weak and we should appreciate that. Will it be able to sustain a lengthy occupation of Ukraine?

What should be the response? Yes, sanctions could make Putin pay a price. There has been approval of the brave decision of Germany in respect of Nord Stream 2. The Ukrainian people have responded well thus far. I was at a conference in Odessa two months ago as the only UK parliamentarian and was most impressed by the morale of the people. There will be much greater resistance than Putin so far assumes.

I ask the Minister, if I may, about China. China will presumably veto any United Nations Security Council resolution. Is it likely that Russia will now become increasingly dependent on China? What has been the Chinese response, in spite of the Chinese line of “no interference in internal affairs”?

Obviously the West must underline our own red lines, as my noble friend Lord West said. What are the consequences? We must be honest: we must be ready to pay a price ourselves. We must look to make Russia a pariah. I mention the Council of Europe: Putin is not going to lose any sleep over it, but how absurd it is that Russia is allowed to remain a member of what is the key human rights organisation in Europe. NATO must give a united response. One unintended consequence of Putin’s advance and invasion is surely this: there will be a united NATO, which will respond as such, and it may be that Sweden and Finland will look at their own interests and decide that they too must become members of the alliance.

11.38 am

Baroness Northover (LD): My Lords, the security warnings, as Ukraine was encircled, were indeed right. It seemed that the Ukrainian leadership itself thought full invasion was unthinkable—no doubt justifiable in any sane world. Others, maybe even Joe Biden in his off-the-cuff remark about limited incursion, thought that the long battles in Donbas pointed to Putin seeking a land corridor from the Crimea. Yes, that is now being achieved, but the apparently unthinkable has happened.

A number now point to evidence of Putin potentially being an unhinged leader—indeed, maybe we have another casualty of Covid—but we have had only recently to worry about a US President with his finger on the nuclear button, someone who has just expressed admiration for Putin. William Hague—the noble Lord, Lord Hague—and others warned us that Putin had made his views

clear that Ukraine should not be counted as a sovereign country. His sense of history is not ours. Timothy Garton Ash notes:

“To be clear: when ... he threatened anyone ‘who tries to stand in our way’ with ‘consequences you have never encountered in your history’, he was threatening us with nuclear war.”

We must take that extremely seriously.

No one managed to rein in Hitler. No one is reining in President Xi in China. The UK has proved totally powerless as the rights of Hong Kongers are trampled on. What will the world do if President Xi invades Taiwan? China will be watching closely here. The West’s reactions must be assessed as to whether they will have traction over those around Putin—we can be sure they will not have traction with Putin himself.

Experts note that this time, unlike with Crimea, Putin did not bother to prepare the Russian people for this invasion. Has the occupation been in the pipeline for many years, or just more recently, particularly since dealing with the upsurge of dissent in Belarus? I hear what the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, said—the real fear here was democracy on Putin’s borders. Because of that lack of preparation, we can see that not all Russia supports him. There have been demonstrations by brave people. Our sister party in Russia, Yabloko, has declared that the war against Ukraine is “the gravest crime”. It sees the consequences to be long lasting and that behind this are

“lies, cruelty and absolute indifference of the Russian authorities to people.”

It is clear that the invasion was contrary to the national interests of Russia and

“destroys the future of Russia.”

How right it is, but also how brave.

Sanctions will not be effective unless they really bite, as we have heard, so can the Minister tell us why the economic crime Bill, already ready to go, cannot come forward immediately? He has fought hard against public registers of holdings in the overseas territories; will he now change his mind? We cannot wait, for example, for the Serious Fraud Office and others to be strengthened. Fighting financial crime in the City of London was also partly funded by ODA money: this is another area where aid cuts have bitten. Why are Rosneft and Gazprom not among those sanctioned? Is it fear? We see the exercise of money and power when we see Catherine Belton under severe legal pressure over her book, *Putin’s People*. It is the subject of five separate lawsuits brought by Russian billionaires and Rosneft. We should note here BP’s involvement with Rosneft: what engagement are we having there?

It is likely that Russia, in the first instance, will prevail in Ukraine. Clearly, those within the country who will be targeted are in the utmost danger. Will we be more generous to refugees than we are with the Afghans, where we promised sanctuary and then slammed the door? Clearly, it is vital to secure the countries to the east, but we also need to be aware of the destabilising Russian influence in the Balkans. By pulling out of the EU, we gave up much of our influence there. The Russians are busy with misinformation. We have had war in Europe in more recent times than World War II, in the Balkans, and Russia is playing a part in helping to stoke things there, destabilising the region.

I am glad we are working with the EU, but we are on the edge. We have not been able to play a central role; for example, in persuading Italy to move further on sanctions. Do we note that China is cultivating Italy? We cannot let our attention shift, as it has, for example, away from Afghanistan, with dire consequences. We need to recognise the continued threat from Putin and similar threats from other authoritarian regimes, where those in power have amassed to themselves great wealth and power, and perhaps increasingly developed the paranoia that can go along with that, with such dangerous consequences for the world as a whole.

11.44 am

Lord Dannatt (CB): My Lords, I join the near-universal condemnation of current operations by Russia against Ukraine. Frankly, the return of violent war in Europe is an obscenity, and a return to state-on-state war is not acceptable in the 21st century. Putin and Putin's Russia must pay the price for what they are currently carrying out. However, many of us will have seen that many Russians do not support what President Putin is doing. They see this as Putin's war and the Kremlin's war; it is not their fight and we need to recognise that.

In condemning what the Russians are doing, I commend the Ukrainians for the spirit with which they are resisting. They may be outgunned and out-tanked, but they are certainly not out-spirited, and we need to support that spirit. Our response must be unified, intense and sustained. The unity of the West is one of our strongest weapons. The sanctions being mooted must be the widest and deepest imaginable and, moreover, the isolation of Russia from all international fora must be complete. All this must be sustained for the long term.

If Putin's operational aim is to effect regime change in Kyiv in order to bring Ukraine into the wider Russian sphere, I suggest that our strategic aim should be regime change in Moscow to bring Russia back into the family of civilised nations. Closer to home, I welcomed last year's announcement by the Government of an increase in defence spending, but the quantum of that remains insufficient and the balance within it remains incorrect. Our land warfare capability has become a shadow of our other capabilities. Frankly, we need to see an investment in our main battle tanks, in our infantry fighting vehicles, our artillery and our air defence. We may aspire to put an armoured division into the field, but we cannot: at the most, we might be able to field a weak armoured brigade. That is completely unacceptable.

Theodore Roosevelt, speaking about international relations, said:

"Speak softly and carry a big stick".

With regard to Ukraine, we have been speaking softly, but I ask: where is our big stick?

11.46 am

Baroness Meyer (Con): My Lords, yesterday, 24 February 2022, is a date which will live in infamy. President Putin told his people that the purpose of the invasion was to de-Nazify Ukraine. The repulsive irony of his lying statement is that, from the very first pictures,

the Russian assault looked just like the Nazi invasion of Poland in 1939, or of Russia itself two years later. Putin's Panzers are on the warpath in a manner that would make Hitler proud.

I, like many others, bought into the myth of Putin, the cool-headed, chess-playing strategist who was never going to invade Ukraine. At the beginning of the year, Putin sent to Washington and NATO Headquarters in Brussels two draft treaties. These set out his demands: Ukraine never to join NATO and NATO to retreat to the status quo ante the collapse of the Soviet Union. These demands went beyond the acceptable, but there was something in them that we might have been able to work with. However, by invading Ukraine, he has blown diplomacy out of the window. By personally deceiving both President Macron and Chancellor Scholz, he has lost all trust. His aggression will strengthen NATO's unity and determination to protect its eastern members. That is the very opposite of what is to be found in these draft treaties—the very opposite of his wish to reverse the security arrangements put in place after the Cold War.

Europe will now become an armed camp, in which NATO is revived by the adrenaline shot of Russian aggression. Putin, in his derangement, has thus sabotaged his own ambition. What we have to fear in Putin is not an ice-cold calculating machine but a leader become unhinged by his grievances over, as he sees it, history's injustice and the West's indifference to his demands. We should have seen this coming and done something to prevent it.

The question now is how far Putin's megalomania will go. Ukraine is not the limit of his ambitions, as many noble Lords have pointed out. Even as we speak, the Balkans are boiling up again, with Serb revanchism aided and abetted by Moscow.

As it is, Ukraine is ablaze on a scale not seen in Europe since 1945. Short of nuclear war, the situation could not be more dangerous. Putin has smashed the Minsk agreements of 2014 and 2015, driven a coach and horses through the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, brushed aside the OSCE and violated the 1994 Budapest understanding. To all of these, Moscow had put its signature.

But, as always, we in the West judge our enemies by our own standards rather than theirs. We believed, or wanted to believe, Putin's assurances that he had no hostile intent towards Ukraine, even though he had been amassing troops, launching cyberattacks and staging provocations. Of the justifications he has publicly given for attacking Ukraine, not a single one is true. Now, too late in the day, we realise that he had been planning this all along, drip-feeding false information to his own people since 2014. The West's naivety will be a lesson that should remain with us for the rest of the century and beyond.

As someone of Russian blood, and some Ukrainian blood as well, and as someone whose family was arrested and killed by the Bolsheviks, I can only weep for the Ukrainian and Russian people. They will be the ones who pay the price for Putin's lies and deceptions.

Can my noble friend the Minister say whether Her Majesty's Government will discuss with NATO allies the urgent need to increase defence budgets so that our

[BARONESS MEYER]

alliance can offer serious deterrence to Russian aggression? Is she confident that the FCDO has adequate Russian and Ukrainian expertise, including language speakers, on hand?

11.52 am

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town (Lab): My Lords, like others, current events ricochet around my family life. My father fought in what he believed would be the war to end wars in Europe. He fought for peace, the rule of law and democracy, and against invasions. My sister was born on 4 March 1946—one day before the Fulton, Missouri speech when Churchill stressed the need for the US and Britain to act to guarantee that resulting peace and stability against the Soviet menace which had lowered an “iron curtain” across Europe.

I was born, like NATO, in 1949; in West Germany, where my father—still in the Army—worked to help resettle displaced persons, concentration camp survivors and those made homeless or stateless or relocated during the years of conflict. They were a reminder of the long post-conflict fallout for the people of disputed lands. In the case of Ukraine, many were never to return, as the noble Lord, Lord Finkelstein, movingly described in the *Times*. His family was from Lwow—known to his great-grandfather as Lemberg—which is of course Lviv; those name changes are testament to the conflicts in that great land. No wonder that, for our noble colleague, this is not happening in a faraway country of which he knows nothing. It is uncomfortably close to home.

Yesterday, I received this message from Vitaliy in Lviv, after attacks had already started in the capital:

“In Lviv everything is still scarily quiet. Shops are empty, but there are queues at ATMs and pharmacies. We’re just patiently waiting for an attack. I’m worried for the safety of friends and family. It’s horrible to realize how one pathetic man could force a war.”

His Kentish Town colleague, Aidan Muller, was in near disbelief that, in 2022 in Europe, his Ukrainian friend was heading down to air raid shelters.

Sadly, as the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Leeds wrote yesterday:

“Ukrainians are no strangers to conflict or sacrifice. This is a land which saw millions killed under the jackboot of a dictator who, to echo Putin’s line, had no greater obligation than to ‘defend the security interests of our own people’.”

That false pretext of Hitler was no more convincing than the pretexts of today’s Russian dictator. As the right reverend Prelate wrote:

“History never repeats itself, but echoes can be felt for generations.”

That explains some of the deep anguish now being felt in Ukraine. We remember Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, but also, as the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, said, we remember what we thought was a game-changer on that other 9/11 in 1989, when the wall came down. We were clearly wrong.

An attack on one is an attack on us all—something wider than NATO, wider than any military or territorial approach—for this attack is on the precious, invaluable, democratic family, a family with a free press, free and fair elections, the rule of law and respect for sovereignty, agreed borders and self-determination.

I do not know the Ukrainian equivalent of “Ich bin ein Berliner”. But I know why we weep for Ukraine.

11.57 am

Lord McDonald of Salford (CB): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Hayter of Kentish Town. I agree with every word she said. It is an honour to join the chorus of congratulations to my noble friend Lord Sedwill on his maiden speech. As usual, he was forensic, expert and persuasive. Your Lordships’ House will need all those qualities as we confront a gathering crisis which will test not just the UK but the whole international system.

This crisis is the product of one man’s obsession—one man who, as the noble Lord, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, reminded us, has changed his mind. He used to accept Ukraine as a sovereign state. However, in 2007 President Putin told the Munich Security Conference that he no longer accepted the supplicant role he saw as assigned to Russia at the end of the Cold War. In 2014, he annexed Crimea. In the intervening eight years, he has become increasingly careless of the home front; he assumes the support of the Russian people and requires it of his Ministers. Public acceptance of previous military operations cooled when the zinc-lined coffins of soldiers began to be shipped home. To avoid that problem this time, Putin has equipped the army with mobile crematoria.

On Monday, the world witnessed an extraordinary meeting of Russia’s national security council in the Hall of the Order of St Catherine in the Kremlin. He demonstrated that it is not only President Macron and Chancellor Scholz whom he keeps at a distance but also the people supposed to be his closest advisers. The only player whom he has taken trouble to court is President Xi. When Putin visited Beijing for the opening of the Olympics on 4 February, the two signed the “no limits” partnership. They presented themselves as birds of a feather, if not allies. The long opening section on democracy fails even to mention the word “elections”, still less acknowledge the vital importance of regular, free and fair elections for a vibrant democracy.

Today the international community faces a test in New York. The UN is a strikingly sympathetic forum for Russia, in part because Russia has posed as an opponent of colonialism. However, the speech by the Kenyan permanent representative on Monday was, perhaps, an indication that things are changing. In today’s vote at the Security Council, all eyes will be on the Chinese. Will they join Russia in vetoing or will they abstain?

The West has settled its course with sanctions that we are rapidly ratcheting up. China is watching with a direct interest. For them, Taiwan is analogous to Putin’s analysis of Ukraine: a renegade province which must be brought to heel. To affect future Chinese behaviour, we must now demonstrate our seriousness to China—our determination to withstand economic pain ourselves in order to defeat Putin. More than that, and much more difficult than that, we need to persuade China to join us.

Every international crisis has a key forum for its handling. Given the Russian veto, this time it is unlikely to be the UN. To me, the G7 looks most promising—more particularly, the G7 co-ordinating closely with China. Fortunately, Germany is in the chair—the G7 member with the best relationship with Beijing. To work, sanctions need to be comprehensive, prolonged, and rigorously

and universally applied. If China is not playing, they will take many years to deliver. China is, by far, Russia's largest trading partner. In 2020, bilateral trade was nearly \$150 billion, more than five times the volume of the Netherlands in second place. The UK was in third place—the only top 10 partner with rapidly increasing trade in 2020.

Today, the Foreign Secretary writes in the *Telegraph* that we must be ready to accept short-term pain for long-term gain. With respect, that is wrong; we must be prepared to ensure long-term economic pain because it is the right thing to do to save Ukraine. More than any other single factor, China's behaviour will determine the speed of success. If China will not join us, then the West needs to think again about its relationship with China. The stakes could not be higher.

12.02 pm

Baroness Kramer (LD): My Lords, there is one particular lever that we especially control, and that is access to the financial and legal services of the City of London. The Government have taken steps now to begin to ban Russia from accessing those services—I hope the Minister will be able to tell us that they are going much farther than the original announcement. I also understand that actions are being taken in co-ordination with the United States and with financial centres across the EU. But perhaps the Minister could talk to us about the relationship that we have with both Singapore and Hong Kong, with their very active financial centres, and other potential locations that could provide an alternate route and tell us what progress has been made on closing down access on those markets as well.

We also control a lever—I am almost ashamed to say—and that is access to the money laundering capabilities of the City of London, widely known as the London laundromat. We are all aware that London has been washing dirty money from kleptocrats and oligarchs—with strong connections to Putin and his regime—in the hundreds of millions of pounds and, frankly, the Government have gazed on it with a fairly lax eye, promising action, but very little has actually taken place.

The Government have announced that they will freeze the assets of those on the sanctions list—and I hope that includes their networks of family and associates to whom most of the assets have been passed. Liquid assets will already have been moved out of the UK in the past few days. I regret that we were not in a position, apparently, to act earlier and more quickly to prevent the escape of those assets. But most will have disguised ownership and a complex web of shell companies. We know that over £1 billion is settled in London property alone—again, under shell company names—but there is so much more in sports clubs, communications and operating businesses. It really will be a terrible task to unravel it. I join those who take the view that, in many cases, these assets should be seized and not just frozen. I must ask the Minister: are our Crown dependencies and overseas territories adopting the same sanctions? Because if not, we do not have a loophole; we have an escape hatch.

Please can the Minister bring forward, as soon as next week, the Bill for the public register of beneficial owners of property in the UK? I think I am probably

not supposed to know this, but this legislation has been drafted and ready to go for weeks. The Government have made the decision not to introduce it and to hold it back as part of a broader piece of legislation; it does not need to be—it can stand alone. It is urgent and could be tackled very rapidly. I am sure both Houses will co-operate. In looking at immediate issues, will the Government support the amendment passed by this House in the National Insurance Contributions Bill for public registers in the freeports to prevent the London laundromat being devolved out across the country? I hope that they will.

Speaking of networks—I talked about family and associates—we also have to bring to book the enablers of money laundering, including the legal firms, the accountants, the banks, the property agents and the developers. That network is laced with respectable names, and many are very well connected throughout the current political establishment. Can the Government tell me: will the new kleptocrat unit in the National Crime Agency also be tackling these enablers and tackling them vigorously? If this unit is to be more than a gimmick, it has to be properly staffed, it has to have strategy and goals, it has to have priorities, and I am told that none of these is currently in place—if I am wrong, I would appreciate the comments of the Minister. To empower this unit to go after the enablers, will the Government commit immediately to introduce “failure to prevent” legislation? We have templates from other Bills—the drafting would be a matter of hours.

I hear that the Biden Administration have engaged intently over recent weeks with US companies that will be impacted by economic sanctions, making clear their intentions and assisting in mitigation. The companies I have talked to do not report the same engagement in the UK, but perhaps my vision is too narrow. Have the UK Government been doing the same? And since I am focusing on finance, have they met with the key players in the City of London, both to use their expertise in shaping sanctions and to give them a clear view of their intentions so that they are prepared to act and to act quickly and effectively? Could the Minister perhaps tell us which players have been involved in such discussions with regard to finance—regulators, banks, insurance companies, fintechs, et cetera?

While it will take an international decision, are the UK Government totally committed to closing Russia out of SWIFT—the international money transfer system? That is probably the most effective tool of all to show Russia its pariah status. But our companies in our country will need mitigation to cope with the consequences of that, and is that planned?

UK firms will be hit by the effect of sanctions, some devastatingly. The UK population, especially the poorest, will be hit by a spiralling cost of living. Will the Government have a rescue fund, and other mitigations, for SMEs that are hurt, and also will they look at the damage to the UK population and now increase universal credit and cancel the rise of the national insurance contributions uplift?

12.08 pm

Lord Hannay of Chiswick (CB): My Lords, one of my first professional involvements with Ukraine was in 1994 when, as Britain's Permanent Representative

[LORD HANNAY OF CHISWICK]

to the UN, I was instructed, along with my Russian and US colleagues, as co-depositaries of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, to transmit to the UN the Budapest memorandum, certifying it as a formal international agreement. The memorandum guaranteed Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in return for handing over all the nuclear warheads and missiles that the Soviet Union had left behind. My Russian colleague was one Sergei Lavrov. I hope that touches his conscience—it certainly should do—but I rather doubt whether it does.

We need to realise, I believe, that the events of the last few days have triggered a second Cold War. Like the first, it will probably last quite a long time and impose costs on ourselves as well as others. It will be a necessary response to a war of choice, a war of aggression, and therefore a war crime.

How, in practical terms, should we react? We should surely give no international legitimacy to any puppet Government the Russians may try to install, nor to the Governments of the five illegal statelets they have installed in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine by the use of force. The elected Government of President Zelensky should remain our interlocutor and the holder of Ukraine's UN seat.

On further sanctions, I hope that excluding Russia from the SWIFT payment system will figure. It is a pity we are not at the European Council table, or in the room at least, to advocate for that. Do we not, too, need to consider recreating something like the CoCom international system on strategic exports? Should we not also consider reviving in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office what used to be called the information research department to deal with disinformation and to undermine the false narrative being put about by the Kremlin, RT and trolls on social media? I very much welcomed the emphasis the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, gave to that issue in his remarkable maiden speech. Then there is the economic crime Bill, still to appear; surely that needs to go on to the statue book in this Session of Parliament and not the next one. Of course, Ukrainians will need all the humanitarian help we can give them, and Ukrainian asylum seekers must, and I hope will, be treated rapidly and sympathetically.

The Russians have thrown down the gauntlet against the European security order they themselves helped to create in 1990. We will need to respond to that challenge with patience and determination by boosting the defences of NATO allies most exposed to pressure; by recognising that the European region is now a higher priority for us than the Indo-Pacific region; and by keeping in lockstep with the US, our other NATO partners and the EU itself, which is already playing a key role over sanctions.

Yesterday was a grim day for all Europeans. But we rose successfully to the challenge after the Second World War, and we should be able to do so again now. It is our own security that is at stake.

12.12 pm

Baroness Neville-Jones (Con): My Lords, I was in Germany when the wall fell. It was a marvellous moment to have the whole of our continent back instead of

being faced by a line through the middle of Germany—just a few hundred miles from us, after all. That was, for practical purposes, as far east as one could go in those days. I never thought that I would have the pleasure of seeing all that reversed in my lifetime, but it was. Now we travel backwards as Russia occupies Ukraine.

It is pretty clear, I think, that Putin intends to oust President Zelensky and his Government and imprison him if he can, if not worse. A puppet regime will be installed, and the country will be ruled with an iron fist to counter what I think will be the inevitable insurgency.

I have to say, I have some doubts about the thesis that Putin really fears democracy, certainly in any normal sense of the word. I think he has a profound contempt for it, which is why there is some trust in the thesis that he has almost certainly taken on more than he thinks and understands in trying to hang on to a Ukraine that has learned about different ways of running society. I hope that will prove to be the case.

Sadly, as the speeches in this House have already indicated, we should not imagine that this situation is going to be rapidly reversed by economic sanctions: we are talking about years at best, provided sanctions are maintained. What the noble Lord, Lord McDonald, said about China in that respect is well taken. That is an area where we will have to do some work.

In addition to the kleptocracy unit, the Government and the Prime Minister are going to need a large and well-funded—properly funded—unit to chase sanctions evasion. It is certainly going to happen, particularly in a country as well practised in criminality as Russia. On the other hand, effective enforcement may well have some beneficial political effects in that it will undermine the deal that Putin made with the oligarchs that they could make and use their money freely provided that they kept out of politics. Their political neutrality will have been for nothing, so, potentially, some destabilisation of the regime may begin.

As a signatory to the Budapest memorandum, this country has a special obligation to continue to help Ukraine. We cannot, must not, just leave Ukraine to its fate. We should certainly continue to give Ukraine the aid we can, including military aid, though we must be careful not to pursue policies which merely aggravate its suffering.

As other noble Lords have said, there will be an early need for humanitarian aid, and there are going to be refugees. This country will not be on the front line in terms of numbers, but I trust that in the case of those who want to come to the UK, there will not be prolonged arguments as to whether they qualify to do so or whether they can be allowed to work here.

What has happened has much wider significance, of course, than the events in Ukraine, serious and extensive as these are. As other noble Lords have noted, the story of Putin tearing up the paper on which the post-war European order has rested started in 2008 in Georgia, well before the annexation of Crimea in 2014. During that time, he had considerable evidence that the political price to be paid for illegal activity would be low. We have been very slow off the mark in countering Putin's agenda. Sanctions and reinforcing the borders of NATO to prevent any further land

grabs by him are a very important but belated start in reversing the price to Putin of his aggressive policies, but we have to make that price still steeper. The Government need to put more resource and effort behind their correct contention that the security of the Euro-Atlantic area is the UK's main focus. The peace dividend is long over.

If our aim is to bring about an isolated pariah state, not only must Europe end energy dependence on Russia; we must also increase our political resilience, rendering ineffective Russian malign interference in democracy, Putin's manipulation of our political processes, and the daily misinformation and disinformation activities of his agencies—in sum, the hybrid warfare of which Russia is such a successful exponent. Other noble Lords have mentioned this, and it is an important part of our broadening policy.

Yesterday, in the other place, the Prime Minister implied that tackling online issues could await the online safety Bill, but that is some way off. We are admittedly in for the long haul, but we cannot wait years to get going on what is a Europe-wide issue, in respect of which some countries are much more vulnerable than the UK.

So, success requires close daily co-ordination across our continent. Ad hoc UK co-operation with the rest of Europe in pursuit of our wider security goals will not be adequate to achieve our aims. We need daily, close, structured co-operation with both the Governments and the institutions of the rest of Europe.

12.19 pm

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab): My Lords, in light of the one issue I intend to speak about, I draw attention to my interests in the register, particularly that I am the chair of the European Leadership Network and that I have a consultancy contract with, as well as being the vice-chair of, the Nuclear Threat Initiative. It is a pleasure to follow the noble Baroness, Lady Neville-Rolfe, who has made a wise and well-informed speech.

Noble Lords: Neville-Jones.

Lord Browne of Ladyton (Lab): I apologise to the noble Baroness. I will start again. With some trepidation now, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, on an excellent maiden speech. I do not think that any of us who have known him in the many other important positions he has held are surprised that it was an excellent speech, to be candid. I thank him for his service and I look forward to his future contributions to your Lordships' House.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine will have profound consequences for the security of all Europe and beyond, as many noble Lords have said. Putin's resort to force sets Russia-West relations back by decades and it may be longer than decades before we can unwind the damage done. It is a totally unjustified attack. Among other things, it is a gross violation of Article 2 of the UN charter, which commits Russia to respect the "sovereign equality" of other states, to settle disputes peacefully and to refrain from

"the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state".

We stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. Those who believe in democracy and the international rule of law and who are peacemakers support the harshest sanctions against those responsible for this outrage and its inevitable tragic consequences, which are now playing out, hour by hour, on our television sets.

In recent years, we have lost important conventional and nuclear arms control agreements that grew out of the Cold War and helped to end it. Neglect of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty, designed to prevent major force build-ups on the continent; withdrawal from the Treaty on Open Skies, which provided transparency about military capabilities and movements, and from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which was designed to prevent an unconstrained offence/defence arms race; and non-compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which reduced the danger of nuclear war in Europe, have exacerbated a downward spiral of mistrust between Russia and the West. As a result, co-operation between the parties has eroded, concerns about military capabilities have grown and, consequently, the risk of miscalculation is heightened. Terrible and shocking as the unprovoked, unjustified criminal invasion of Ukraine by Russia is, worse still is the possibility that this invasion might escalate to global thermonuclear war—it really could do so.

On 3 January, the leaders of the five nuclear weapons states issued a joint statement titled

"On Preventing Nuclear War and Avoiding Arms Races".

While they—even Putin—agree that

"a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought"—

namely, that nuclear war serves no rational purpose—the mere fact that no one plans to fight a nuclear war over Ukraine does not mean that it cannot happen. It does not mean that it will happen; that is, to some degree, up to us and the decisions we make. While the Russian alert status has apparently not been raised, the annual strategic Grom drills of nuclear-capable missiles that took place on Saturday conveyed quite a different message, one of nuclear threat, and Putin has made statements that make such an escalation more credible.

As the noble Baroness, Lady Goldie, reminded us, Putin's chilling warning to the West early yesterday morning on Russian TV, when he said—I paraphrase—that anyone who tries to interfere with Russia will suffer consequences such as they have never experienced before in their history, was bad enough. We are all very familiar with these words because they have been played out again and again on our television sets, but we are less familiar with the fact that he added something even worse:

"As for the military sphere, modern Russia, even after the collapse of the USSR and the loss of a significant part of its potential, is today one of the most powerful nuclear powers in the world and, moreover, has certain advantages in a number of the latest types of weapons. In this regard, no one should have any doubts that a direct attack on our country will lead to defeat and dire consequences for any potential aggressor."

During the Cold War, when the fear of nuclear war was taken so seriously, words that could potentially pave the way for nuclear war were avoided. It appears that now at least one man has forgotten that fear and those words can be uttered.

[LORD BROWNE OF LADYTON]

In that context, where, as my noble friend Lord West said, the tripline for escalation is set so low, consequential war between Russia and NATO forces—war involving NATO allies such as Poland, the Baltic states or Hungary—could very easily escalate to war involving, first, tactical and, finally, strategic nuclear force. In the days and weeks ahead, leaders in London, Moscow and Washington and throughout Europe must be careful to avoid new and destabilising military deployments, close encounters between Russian and NATO forces and the introduction of offensive weapons that undermine common security. There will be a natural and understandable reaction in the West to isolate Russia, cutting off direct communication and interactions. But at this moment of high military tension, communication, arms control and continuing space for diplomacy are more important than ever for effective deterrence.

12.25 pm

Lord Stirrup (CB): My Lords, I start by adding my warm congratulations to my noble friend Lord Sedwill on his excellent and perceptive maiden speech, with which I entirely agree.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine did not begin yesterday, but in 2014. The seizure of Crimea and the involvement of Russian forces in the Donbass region pointed clearly to Putin's contempt for international law and national sovereignty. What a pity we did not respond sufficiently robustly then. This most recent escalation, in the face of all diplomatic attempts to avert it, has, I hope, laid to rest the lie that Putin is simply concerned about and reacting to the so-called threat from NATO. It has long been obvious for those with eyes to see or to read Putin's own words that his objective is to return Ukraine to the status of a Russian fiefdom. Nor should we delude ourselves that he will stop with Ukraine: if he is successful there, he will turn his eyes to other countries that were once part of the Soviet empire. It is therefore crucial that he is prevented from gaining his objective in Ukraine.

The Ukrainian people are paying the price of Putin's aggression and rightly have our sympathy. But let us also remember the poor Russian conscripts who are being made to shed their blood by the deranged actions of a gangster regime that plunders the resources of its country for personal benefit, mounts assassinations in other countries as well as its own, interferes in the democratic processes of other nations, and bullies, invades and kills its neighbours. Those parts of the international community that care about peace and freedom and stand for a rules-based order within which all can thrive can no longer ignore or excuse the threat that Putin poses to this continent.

So what is to be done? In the short term, we must of course impose robust, targeted and enduring sanctions that enjoy wide support in the international community, in Europe and beyond. That will not be easy. Such sanctions will harm those imposing them, some much more so than the UK. Mustering the necessary international resolve and endurance is likely to tax our diplomatic skills to the limit. Sanctions will not, however, be enough. Putin will fail in Ukraine only if the Ukrainian people continue to resist and engage him in

an unconventional military campaign that is protracted and costly. This is their intention, but do they have the wherewithal? We cannot fight for them, but we can and should give them all the indirect military support we can to enable them to carry on the fight.

We must also learn the strategic lessons of this conflict. Not long ago, some observers were questioning the continued relevance of NATO. In part, this was because they saw future threats to the security of Europe as originating principally from outside the continent. Even the UK's integrated review, while acknowledging the challenge still posed by Russia, indicated a tilt more towards the Asia-Pacific region. The peace and security of our own continent should always be our top priority. Even those who did not foresee a threat to European peace—and many of us did—should remember the unbounded capacity of the future to surprise us, usually in unpleasant ways. NATO remains the bedrock of European security and must be strengthened.

However, we have strategic weaknesses that must now be addressed urgently. Globalisation, for all its benefits, has brought with it significant vulnerabilities. The economic, commercial and societal dependencies that can result from such globalisation make it more difficult for us to respond appropriately to international crises when they involve nations on whom we rely for goods and services. It is neither possible nor desirable for us to turn back the clock completely in this regard, but we need to strike a much better balance between commercial benefits and national resilience.

The Prime Minister has spoken about the need for the West to wean itself off Russian oil and gas, and that is right. However, that scratches only the surface of the problem. What about the rare earth metals that are so important to modern technology? What about other resources on which UK industry relies, such as titanium for Rolls-Royce aero engines, 20% of which has been supplied by Russia?

This is not just about Russia. Putin is the source of the current crisis, but we are vulnerable in other parts of the world. If we are to stand up to China's assault on the rules-based international order, as the integrated review claims we will, we cannot leave ourselves vulnerable to Chinese economic industrial or technological intimidation.

The immediate priority is to offer Ukraine all the support we can and to help mobilise international efforts in this regard. However, we must also learn the strategic lessons and ensure that we are better placed in future to stand up to threats to international peace and security.

12.31 pm

Baroness Ludford (LD): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the superb speech from the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup. I start my own remarks with a light note on which I will not continue. I congratulate my female colleagues, the noble Baroness, Lady Hayter of Kentish Town, and my noble friends Lady Kramer and Lady Smith of Newnham, on their sartorial display of solidarity with the Ukrainian people in their blue and yellow. Sadly, I have neither colour in my wardrobe.

I heard the former head of MI6 on the radio this morning saying that hindsight is a wonderful thing. Well, we have known for a very long time that Putin was a thug who brooked no opposition and had his opponents and critics murdered, including Alexander Litvinenko here in London and Bill Browder's lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, both back in 2009. It did not need hindsight to worry about Russian oligarchs with close Kremlin links being allowed not only to flaunt their wealth in their London playground and extend their establishment influence here in the UK but to be celebrated in some quarters for it. Putin's cronies have been getting away with it for years, with successive Governments turning a blind eye. We must stop this rot in our midst and vow never to allow the UK's subordination to dodgy money to happen again. As writer Oliver Bullough, who knows a thing or two about these matters, said:

"I'm trying to think of a good three-word slogan for my proposals of finding out who owns the shell companies that own our capital city, who's behind the money laundering schemes, and resourcing the police so it can investigate crimes thus exposed."

His suggestion for that slogan is—you guessed—"Take Back Control".

The football authorities have stopped the Champions League final taking place in St Petersburg. The spotlight now turns to the Formula 1 authorities to stop the grand prix, which is due to take place in Russia in September. Can the Minister tell us what representations the Government are making to that effect?

Many thousands of Ukrainians have headed to the borders following the Russian invasion. Slovakia has opened its borders and is allowing every Ukrainian to enter Slovakia, even without a passport. Poland will be receiving many Ukrainian refugees. Ireland has waived visa requirements on Ukrainians. Meanwhile, here, it is bitterly ironic that on Monday we will be debating Report on the Nationality and Borders Bill, one provision of which is the criminalisation of anyone who reaches these shores without a visa.

Our Home Secretary has extended visas for Ukrainians who are already here, which is welcome, but has not set up any routes for most Ukrainian refugees to reach UK shores. The UK has stopped accepting visa applications from Ukrainians stuck in the country, and even family members of British citizens can apply only in Lviv or in a neighbouring country. This means there is no safe and legal route for most Ukrainians to seek asylum in Britain. Will the noble Lord now tell us that the Home Secretary will have a rethink on that?

This is an occasion when the cut in the aid budget is felt most acutely. However, of course we as individuals can contribute in a personal capacity to funds run by the Ukrainian community in this country for their families and friends in Ukraine, and Yale professor Timothy Snyder has given a list of NGOs. I fully support the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, who in his excellent speech called for bodies such as the BBC World Service to be supported to play a major role to counter disinformation and to assist those brave Russians standing up against warmongering.

I understand that the UK is calling for Russia to be excluded from SWIFT. Can the Minister offer an insight into the opposition of our EU partners to doing that?

If only we were there in Brussels to argue the case for tougher decisions. This crisis is a perfect example of our reduced influence since we left the EU, as the noble Lord, Lord Heseltine, has said, and indeed of our not seeking any continuing role in the institutional architecture of EU foreign security and sanctions policy. The boast of "global Britain" looks more than a little hollow when it consists of reintroducing blue passports and imperial measurements rather than helping Europe speak with one voice.

One essential element of our longer-term strategy must be to make this country as sound and robust in its liberal democracy as it possibly can be, to equip us, with our allies, to be a beacon to the world for liberal values, and to work as closely as possible with those who share them in order to demonstrate to rogue states such as Russia, and their peoples, not only that might is not right but that their aspirations deserve freedom, democracy and human rights.

12.36 pm

Lord Kerr of Kinlochard (CB): My Lords, I was in Moscow in 1968 when the Soviet army put down Dubček, and I feel the same cold horror today that I felt then. However, this is much worse than 1968. In 1991, over 90% of the population of Ukraine voted for independence, with large majorities even in all those regions where there is a strong ethnic Russian population. Our locus to object is far stronger now than it was in 1968. The noble Lord, Lord Hannay, mentioned the Budapest memorandum; it carries the signatures of John Major and Douglas Hurd. In it, the Russians promised that they would respect the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine within its existing borders.

The question is: could we have done more to avert this disaster? I doubt it. Looking at the paranoia and posturing in the Kremlin, I do not think there is much more we could have done. However, there are lessons to be learned of continuing validity as the crisis continues.

First, on sanctions, the best ones are those that deter. However, in order to achieve deterrence, you have to be ahead of the game and you have to go for scale and specificity. The first UK sanctions package totally failed the test of scale, and we are still failing the test of specificity. I do not believe that the Kremlin has paused for a second to consider what we have said about sanctions.

Secondly, we are talking only about sanctioning Russian exports. It is a very difficult thing to do, given that there is a world market in hydrocarbons. What is much easier to do and would have much more impact on the Russians is to sanction their strategic imports. Russia is even more an oil and gas economy now than it was when Putin came in, despite all his welcome early talk of modernising the economy. It has gone backwards. Its manufacturing sector has declined, which means that it is more vulnerable today to controls on the exports of sensitive technology to it than it was then. I believe that the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, was quite right when he spoke of reinventing CoCom—global controls on strategic exports. We seem to be going back to the Cold War—okay, we needed that instrument in the Cold War and we need it again now.

[LORD KERR OF KINLOCHARD]

I have very little more to offer. I support everything said by the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, in a masterly maiden speech. I should like particularly to add my voice to what was said by the noble Lord, Lord Howell of Guildford. Here I slightly part company with the noble Lord, Lord McDonald.

The detaching of Luhansk and Donetsk from Ukraine wins no plaudits in Beijing. Beijing has never recognised Abkhazia and Ossetia. Beijing is rather against the idea of breakaway provinces. Installing a puppet government in Kyiv will alarm not just the Baltic states, Moldova, Armenia and Georgia but an awful lot of Azeris, Kazakhs, Tajiks and Turkmen. This is not a crisis of Putin versus the West; this is not a crisis of Putin versus NATO; this is a crisis of Putin versus the world. We need now to be talking to all those in the former Soviet empire who are uneasy about the idea of the attempted recreation of the Soviet empire and all those in the developing world who are uneasy about what they see as the invasion of an independent state that voted by an overwhelming majority for independence. They are inclined to hope that maybe the world can do something about it. We need to be talking to all our Commonwealth friends and we need to be talking globally. This is not just Putin versus the West; this is Putin versus the world.

12.42 pm

Lord Tugendhat (Con): My Lords, I begin by congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, on his notable maiden speech. His eloquence matches the authority that he brings to the subject. I also share the views initially expressed by the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, but by others as well, that what frightens Putin is the example that democracy on his borders sets to the people of Russia. The combination of fear of democracy on his borders on the one hand and the desire to recreate the empire of Stalin and the tsars on the other makes for a very dangerous combination. No wonder the Baltic states are worried, and others too. I refer particularly to the Baltic states because they are members of NATO, with all that that implies.

I strongly agree with the point of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, that sanctions need to be more than anticipated, greater than was feared. I agree with my noble friend Lord Howell that what has been done so far is inadequate and more needs to be done. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, that when the sanctions regime is applied in its full force, it must be sustained and not weakened. When it comes to the application of sanctions, a particular responsibility rests on the shoulders of this country and Germany: in the case of Germany, because of its dependence on energy from and trade with Russia, and on this country because of the warm welcome we have extended to the Russian oligarchs and to Russian money. It is very important, if our voice is to carry credibility in the counsels of the West, in decisions about what should be done, that we should be seen to be applying the full rigour of sanctions to the people who have banked their money, spent their money, bought property and sought to exercise political influence in London. It is very important that nobody should feel that we are dragging our heels in that respect.

The noble Lord, Lord McDonald, made a very important point when he said that the country must understand the price that we will have to pay for sanctions. This is not just a matter of the banks, financial institutions, estate agents, public schools and all the other beneficiaries of Russian money, the management of the economy will become much more difficult. Energy supplies will become much more expensive. Inflation will become more difficult to control. Supply chains will become more disrupted. It is very important that the Prime Minister should be absolutely clear and frank with the British people about the price that we will have to pay if these sanctions are to be successful. It is all very well to talk about the wickedness of Putin and how we will stand up to him, but the British people need to understand that, if we are to stand up to him, a price will have to be paid. Unless this point is made clear to the British people, Putin will not take seriously our resolve.

I have just two more points to make. First, we have already supplied Ukraine with weapons, and the anti-tank weapons are very good ones; we must be ready to supply more as and when they are required and to do whatever we can to sustain the Ukrainians in whatever form of warfare they are able to carry out. It is also very important that we should be willing to provide humanitarian assistance on a massive scale, both within Ukraine and to those who are fleeing Ukraine. We must do all we can to alleviate suffering there. Finally, in everything we do, we need to make it clear that our quarrel is with Mr Putin and not with the Russian people.

12.47 pm

Lord Adonis (Lab): My Lords, we are all Ukrainians today, in the same way that we were all Czechs and Poles in the face of Hitler, we were all Berliners in the face of Stalin, and we were all Bosnians and Kosovars in the face of Milošević. We share a common humanity, and a common interest as democratic Europeans in checking invasion, imperialism and tyranny.

In Putin, we are dealing with the latest of the great dictators: part rational, part megalomaniac, a wholly cynical and brutish menace to humanity and peaceful relations between states. He may be economically weaker than Hitler and Stalin, but with a nuclear arsenal and a mastery of modern cyberwarfare, he poses threats which even they did not pose. The only solution is his departure, and the only palliative is containment and the maximum possible strength and unity among the democracies he threatens. That is all of us in Europe, starting with his neighbours but not confined to them—as we in Britain know from his chemical weapons attack in Salisbury and Russian disruption of our democratic events and institutions.

Looking back critically, the mistake we made was of demonstrating insufficient strength. The idea that it would have been right, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, to force the new democracies of central and eastern Europe to be neutral when they wanted freely to join the EU and NATO, is now obviously misguided. If Poland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were not in the EU and NATO, what is happening to Ukraine today would probably be happening to them too, and may already have happened.

In respect of Ukraine, we clearly failed in the weakness of our response to the annexation of Crimea eight years ago. The sanctions and preventive measures we are discussing today should have been taken then. We should have moved immediately to isolate and weaken Putin in the same way that we did the equally despicable and dangerous Iranian regime after it, too, started to destabilise Europe from its borders. Part of the reason we did not—and why Ukraine did not become more integrated into the European system—was intense Russian destabilisation, which some people in high European counsels who should know better foolishly and very naively and condescendingly said was evidence of Ukraine's unsuitability to become part of the very European institutions which might have enabled it to survive and grow as a free and independent democracy.

On the crisis we now face, every speaker in this debate has agreed that sanctions must be for real. As the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, said in his extremely able and powerful speech, for sanctions to work, they have to be far bigger and more immediate than Putin is expecting. Chancellor Scholz showed commendable leadership when he announced on the day of the invasion that Nord Stream 2 will be cancelled, but the fact that, four days later, Europe's leaders cannot even agree to exclude Russia from SWIFT and other international payments systems, as we did Iran years ago, is a bad sign. This should happen immediately as part of a Russian trade embargo, which, as the noble Lord, Lord Newby, said, obviously must include Gazprom.

Our Government have a particular responsibility to promote financial sanctions because so many of them apply to transactions and investments in London. Thousands of Putin's cronies should have their UK assets frozen or seized. The operation in the United Kingdom of all Russian banks, financial institutions and state companies—not just a handful—should be disabled. If we could stop Napoleon trading with and through Britain, we can certainly stop Putin.

It is all the more important that we in the UK take the lead on these financial measures—at the price of real pain, as the noble Lord, Lord Tugendhat, said—because our continental European partners need to do the same in respect of their energy dependence on Russia, although, with our own oil and gas reserves in the North Sea, we have a vital part to play here, too. Nord Stream 2 is only the start of the change that is needed to prevent Putin holding Europe to ransom; it has to start now.

We should also offer immediate asylum to all technically qualified Russian personnel, as the United States did after 1945. As the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, said in his immensely powerful speech, militarily and logistically, we should reassert the North Atlantic Treaty's Article 5 guarantee to NATO's 30 members, and we should support Ukrainian resistance so that Putin faces in Kyiv what Brezhnev faced in Kabul: an increasingly debilitating, costly and unpopular guerrilla war with mounting losses of Russian life and prestige.

In his heartfelt address to the Russian people yesterday, delivered in Russian, President Zelensky said:

"We know for sure that we don't want war. Neither cold, hot, or hybrid. But, if we are threatened; if someone is trying to take away our country, our freedom, our lives ... We are going to defend ourselves."

Today, we are all Ukrainians.

12.52 pm

Baroness Sheehan (LD): My Lords, it is a pleasure to follow the noble Lord, Lord Adonis; it was also a pleasure to be in the Chamber to listen to the maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill.

May I start by saying how much I agree with other speakers in condemning the abhorrent actions of the Russian state? An unprovoked invasion of a peaceful, democratic Ukraine by an aggressive, expansionist Russian state is a step back to the dark ages of the previous century. My heart goes out to the people of Ukraine. I applaud the unqualified support for Ukraine that has been voiced by our Government. I hope, however, that we will go much further and faster on sanctions.

Today, I want to bring up just three issues: Chernobyl, energy and refugees. We heard yesterday that the Chernobyl power plant had been captured by the Russians. Reuters news agency quoted an adviser to President Zelensky as saying:

"Russia wants to control the Chernobyl nuclear reactor to signal NATO not to interfere militarily."

Perhaps it is also intended to reinforce symbolically the thinly veiled threat to go nuclear, as a number of noble Lords have said. We also heard from other sources yesterday that the reason for the fight for the Chernobyl site and associate exclusion zone is that it is strategically placed to make a speedier advance on Kyiv. Can the Minister comment on our Government's assessment of why Russia would want to prioritise taking the Chernobyl site?

Although we are physically dependent on Russia for only 3% of our gas supply, it is nevertheless a fact that the global price is somewhat more affected by Russian gas. As of yesterday, UK wholesale gas prices were up by about 70% compared to mid-February, as a direct result of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. I bring this up because there is now an organised group within the Government's Back Benches—the so-called net zero scrutiny group—which is intent on spreading what I can only describe as misinformation in suggesting that the solution to the rising price of gas is to increase production in gas fields located in the North Sea. It ignores the fact that gas is a global commodity, the price of which is skyrocketing, and that UK fields are licensed to overseas producers that will trade the gas on the global markets, as they are bound to do.

Does the Minister agree that such misinformation must be challenged? The truth is that the increased production of indigenous renewable energy is the way to independence from rogue regimes such as Russia. Also, may I suggest to the Government that now is the time to lift the effective moratorium on onshore wind? It is the cheapest form of energy source for the UK, as the Minister, the noble Lord, Lord Callanan, himself noted from the Dispatch Box not so long ago.

I want to ask the Minister about the Government's intended support for Ukrainian refugees, who will be arriving in neighbouring countries to Ukraine in increasingly large numbers. Will we offer them support commensurate with the Afghan citizens resettlement scheme? However, although that scheme initially appeared to be well designed, I do not think the Minister will demur if I say that its execution has been less than satisfactory, with many families still trapped in small

[BARONESS SHEEHAN]

hotel rooms, waiting to be properly resettled and without the settled immigration status that the Government promised. Can the Minister say how the Government are working with humanitarian agencies and Ukraine's neighbours to provide accommodation and support to the people now fleeing Russian troops?

Lastly, how do the Government think the Nationality and Borders Bill will help Ukrainians? Is it not clearer than ever that its provisions will criminalise desperate people forced into desperate measures to safeguard themselves and their families, and has no place in a civilised country?

12.58 pm

Lord Harries of Pentregarth (CB): Yesterday was a sad, bad day for Ukraine, Europe and the world. First, our feelings are of course with the Ukrainian people, who are in for a prolonged period of struggle and suffering.

I fully support everything that the Government are doing by way of sanctions. Whether the sanctions should be more than they are, I leave to other people who are better qualified than me. Put simply, they will have to be applied not just massively and rigorously but over a potentially long period. Putin has built up a war chest of some \$630 billion to see him through the immediate effects of sanctions. Then, of course, his policy is to create facts on the ground and see whether he gets away with it if he holds on long enough.

Russian forces are still in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, camped only 20 miles from Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. Even now, a long time after the 2008 war, they are still in Crimea; of course, they were also in eastern Europe for a long time. Putin will create facts on the ground and, as the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, said, the likely scenario of a puppet Government means that this will last perhaps years, even decades. The question is: have we the will and the staying power to keep going for a long period and not allow everything from Putin's point of view simply to go back to business more or less as normal?

The invasion of Ukraine by Putin creates a tragic dilemma, which I call the nuclear paradox. Massive arsenals of nuclear weapons owned by NATO and Russia make a major nuclear war morally impossible yet, at the same time, make acts of aggression below that more possible. We have that kind of situation in Ukraine. President Biden has said, no doubt rightly, that we will not be putting troops into Ukraine, which simply leaves us with sanctions. The question is not only whether those sanctions will be massive and rigorously applied but whether we are prepared to sustain them for a long period.

One of the features of the crisis over recent months that I have found particularly distressing is the amount of totally false information that has been fed to the Russian people—the number of grotesque lies, as other noble Lords have said. Sadly, despite some heroic resistance to the Putin regime, his popularity in Russia has remained high. We do not know what it will be after the invasion of Ukraine, but I would not be surprised if that massive state propaganda machine has twisted the minds of so many people. This brings

to the fore the importance of truth in public life. No doubt every power has its own form of propaganda; that is inevitable. However, if we have a free press and media, at least in the long run those lies can be exposed for what they are. We do stand for something worthwhile, which in the end comes down to truth in the public sphere.

Ukraine has been carved up and divided between many empires over the centuries: Polish-Lithuanian, Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman and Tsarist. However, both in 1917, before the Soviets took over, and at the end of the Cold War in 1991, it voted decisively for its own autonomy to rule its own affairs. It is quite true, as Putin rightly emphasises, that there are long historic, cultural and religious links between Ukraine and Russia. Orthodox Christianity came to Russia from Kyivan Rus'. Yet invading a country is hardly the way to strengthen those historic, cultural and religious links.

Finally, I return to my first point. I have often returned to the words that TS Eliot wrote in 1939, reflecting on the events of 1938 in Munich. He said that he and many others were shaken in a way from which one does not recover. It was not so much the politics and the events but a general plight. It was not the criticism of a particular Government but a doubt about the validity of a particular civilisation. Did our society,

“which had always been so assured of its superiority and rectitude”, have

“any beliefs more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends?”

The struggle from 1939 to 1945 showed that we did. Today, with the direct use of military force rightly ruled out, that question will be even more searching now than it was then.

1.03 pm

Lord Cormack (Con): My Lords, it is a privilege to follow the noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, who speaks with great wisdom and insight—as did the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, in a very remarkable maiden speech.

When I heard this chilling news yesterday morning in the first half of the “Today” programme, my mind went back to a day in the autumn of 1956, when my father woke me to say that the Russians were firing phosphorous shells into Budapest. That provoked me into joining a political party, in a democracy, to play a part. I duly came to the other place in 1970 and became chairman of the campaign for the release of Soviet Jewry. I was talking to one young man on the eve of his bar mitzvah as the KGB were knocking on the door.

Some 25 years later, in 1989, I took part in a communion service in the Hotel Otkiabrskaya in Moscow, in the shadow of the Kremlin, where they always used to put up the delegations from eastern Europe. I was able to present to Mr Gorbachev's chef de cabinet, Andrei Grachev, a copy of the Bible, symbolic of a million that we were giving to a small group that had formed liaisons within the then Soviet Union. I could not help but reflect on those words of Wordsworth's, written in a very different setting:

“Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive”—
even though I was perhaps not all that young.

Later that year, I was one of a group who chaired sessions in the Peace Palace of the Hague, composed of parliamentarians from the different constituent republics of the Soviet Union. We felt that a new era had dawned. It was something very remarkable, as it was when I took a group of Members of both Houses to Czechoslovakia, as it then was, in 1991. We met the great Mr Dubček. The world seemed to have changed. In a very remarkable speech, the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, talked about his meetings with Mr Putin, at a time when it looked as though he might hold the torch for freedom—but we have now descended into the darkest days of the most desperate Tsars. Yesterday was a demonstration of that.

In this context, we cannot use hard power. We have not actually got very much to use. There is no point in rattling sabres if all you have are scabbards. However, we do have very real soft power, and it is an independent soft power, best exemplified perhaps by the BBC World Service. So I ask the Minister to give a guarantee today that no money will be spared to expand broadcasting services not only in Russia but throughout the former Soviet republics, many of which Mr Putin appears to have his eyes on. It is important that people know the truth, know what is happening, know exactly the measure of the dictator who is now behaving with such appalling savagery towards an innocent people.

It is also important that we take note of two points that were made during this very interesting debate. The noble Lord, Lord Newby, in his excellent speech, talked of how necessary it was that we who are in free Europe should work as one. Brexit is over, but we must forge a new, powerful relationship with the countries of the European Union—all the countries of Europe who believe in democracy and freedom. He was wise to say that. The noble Lords, Lord Kerr of Kinlochard and Lord Dannatt, talked, also in the context of broadcasting, about making sure that those who live under threat, and those who live in Russia itself, know that democracy alone can prevail, and that dictatorship has no future other than misery.

It is good that we have had this debate. I very much hope that the united voice of your Lordships' House will be conveyed.

1.09 pm

Baroness Goudie (Lab): My Lords, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, on his speech and welcome him to the House of Lords.

Around the world, we watch the fear and violence in Ukraine. Our hearts go out to all of them. I welcomed the Prime Minister's Statement last night, but at the same time he did not mention aid and I felt he did not go far enough on the whole question of sanctions. I congratulate noble Lords on the Liberal Benches on what they had to say on sanctions. They are really important.

As the crisis in Ukraine escalates, it is important to hear the voices of women on the ground, as well as global experts. Last week, I attended a meeting convened by the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security, which stands with the people of Ukraine, especially the women peacebuilders who have been struggling for their freedom, democracy and integration

in Europe. We simply must amplify their calls to action. Leading up to this terrible situation, they worked on the ground with other NGOs to provide economic and financial support to Ukraine and to ensure that aid is given to those women who are working in Afghanistan—I am so sorry, in Ukraine; I usually make speeches about Afghanistan.

The majority of SME workers in Ukraine are women. With Covid and the present situation, they are unable to be helped. They are the breadwinners of those families, as we know. I hope all the international aid, and aid from this country, has a gender and family lens.

We must ensure that there is monitoring and accountability of internal actors. The OSCE and other third-party organisations must closely monitor and report on the human rights situation. They must prepare and publish a joint statement on how security threats affect the women in Ukraine, since we know what has happened to women close by in Belarus.

We must ensure women's participation and leadership. Those assessing and reporting on the current security situation are almost exclusively men. We as a country have promised that we will try to ensure that there is 50:50 representation in these sorts of situations, otherwise women will be erased from the crisis narrative, which will hinder their ability to prepare. We must advance inclusion security. Gender should be mainstream in all internationally supported programmes, and security responses in Ukraine and the OSCE should create a regional action plan on Resolution 1325.

We should support civil society, including those international and local NGOs working on the ground, such as the International Rescue Committee. Women's rights organisations and activists should be supported through targeted funding. We should train and provide mentorship to them from afar, and when this tragedy is over.

We should engage regional and international allies to leverage unprecedented co-operation from ourselves, the United States and our European partners, and maybe as far as Australia and New Zealand. We must raise awareness through the media, such as the World Service and other media platforms we talked about earlier.

I call on the Home Office to publish an urgent plan outlining how the United Kingdom can offer safe and legal passage to people fleeing Ukraine. We must absolutely do this, and I call on the Minister to make sure this will happen, because nothing has happened at all. I do not want to see what has happened to other refugees happen to those in Ukraine.

1.13 pm

Lord St John of Bletso (CB): My Lords, yesterday we woke to a new era of war in Europe, made all the more shocking by Putin's implied threat to use nuclear weapons if his forces are interfered with—a tactic that is consistent with the Russian army's tactical doctrine of first use of nuclear weapons.

We must be very clear that this new and unprovoked war in Europe has been initiated and caused by Putin's expansionist ambitions, which will in time almost inevitably see him indicted as a war criminal. Britain has followed its great tradition of standing up to

[LORD ST JOHN OF BLETSO]
dictators in Europe, and quite rightly is leading the western world in its support of Ukraine with our anti-tank weapons, which have so far been very effective in destroying Putin's tanks. However, I fear that Britain may become a target for Putin's threat of retaliation for those who interfere in the Ukraine crisis.

Although Putin is the aggressor, I fear that our Government have failed to learn the lesson of history meted out by past dictators who have started world wars that have led to rivers of blood. The lesson is simple: the way to deter conflict is to increase our military capabilities. That point has been made by several noble Lords. Over the past 10 years of Putin's increasing aggression and hostility, we have seen similar expansionism from Premier Xi Jinping. I am seriously concerned about the possibility of China launching an attack on Taiwan. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Robathan, that our weak response to the Salisbury poisonings on British soil by the Russians exposed our vulnerabilities.

Putin's inner psychology and objectives have been facilitated by a new positive commodities cycle feeding Russia's war coffers. As several noble Lords have mentioned, we are not looking at a weak Russian economy that will swiftly crumble under sanctions, but a strong one, with \$65 billion of reserves and a debt of 18% of GDP. That said, I fully support all the sanctions that have been proposed and I hope they will have the effect we all hope for.

I am concerned that the strategic alliance now formed between Russia and China matches Russia's commodity production to a willing and voracious buyer whose supply lines will now be overland and no longer vulnerable to a naval blockade. This is a nightmare alliance. I agree with the noble Lord, Lord Howell of Guildford, that we and Europe need to reduce our dependence on Russia's oil and gas and create a renewed energy security policy.

We need to rethink our focus on linear, reactive, non-strategic, peacekeeping thinking and replace it with lateral strategic thinking that will get us ahead of the expansionist plans of Russia and China. I entirely agree with the wise words of the noble Lord, Lord Tugendhat, that the quarrel is with President Putin and not with the Russian people.

1.17 pm

Lord Davies of Gower (Con): My Lords, it is a privilege to speak in this debate and to follow the noble Lord, Lord St John of Bletso. I also congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, on his thoughtful and informative maiden speech, and look forward to his future contributions.

As many noble Lords have indicated, this is a clear assault on democracy and on the sovereign nation of Ukraine, and indeed an attack on democracy in Europe. I will be brief, as much of what needs to be said has already been said.

I spent several years based in the region during my police service. I have driven through Ukraine and wondered at its agriculturally rich country. I feel particularly passionate about the right of any sovereign eastern European nation to choose its own destiny, whether it be the European Union or NATO.

We should be alive to the fact that Putin's ultimatum to the west, demanding written "security guarantees" that there will be no further NATO expansion eastwards, not only applies to Ukraine but may well apply to Georgia and other countries, such as Finland and Sweden. Russia does not have an exclusive right to own or control eastern European countries.

Putin has demonstrated that, for the first time in some 80 years—since our last world war—we now have a man with a megalomaniac desire to unleash tyranny on innocent civilians that has no bounds. We in the West, together with NATO, are bang on the money when we say that we will not sign the security guarantees that Putin is demanding. However, I cannot help feeling that we should have been doing more, sooner, in support of Ukraine, post Crimea in 2014, as the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, alluded to.

We should be awake to the prospect that a full-blown war with Ukraine, which has the third-largest army in Europe, would impact on the neighbouring states of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania and thereby present a risk of spillover into four NATO and EU member states. That would create enormous economic and political disruption, with all that entails for Europe.

However, sadly, Putin's actions in Ukraine will have catastrophic consequences. As my noble friend Lord Hague pointed out in yesterday's *Times*:

"Hundreds of thousands, perhaps even millions of people are going to be on the move and they are going to need a lot of looking after ... we must impose before the end of the day, the biggest and most comprehensive package of sanctions on Russia".

I am delighted that yesterday the Prime Minister outlined that very package of economic sanctions, which he described as

"the largest and most severe package of economic sanctions that Russia has ever seen"—[*Official Report, Commons, 24/2/22, col. 564.*]

and which will be replicated by our European and American friends. Announcing that all major Russian banks will have their assets frozen and will be excluded from the UK financial system, stopping them accessing sterling and clearing payments through the UK, is a major move in penalising Putin. Furthermore, banning Russia's national airline Aeroflot from landing in the UK is a very positive step in our strong message to the aggressor Putin. I agree with many noble Lords that we must now root out the dirty money in all its forms in the UK.

From a humanitarian perspective, the consequences are horrific, with families fleeing their homes and having to cross borders in freezing conditions into Hungary and Romania for safety, having lost hope for their country. There is deep concern for the safety, health and well-being of all civilians impacted by the crisis, and I urge our Government to do all that they can, with other European countries, to assist refugees who now find themselves in this distressed situation. I look forward to an assurance from the Minister on this issue.

The Henry Jackson Society has recently stated that Britain and NATO should be willing to designate Russia as a terrorist state. I have long considered Putin's Russia to be a rogue state, a state without honour or integrity. Those words are well justified in view of Putin's lies and clear deceit leading up to the invasion. He claimed

he had no intention of invading Ukraine, while in the background he was amassing troops, launching cyberattacks and staging false pretexts and provocations.

In the words of Dame Barbara Woodward at the emergency UN Security Council meeting on Ukraine:

“The world is calling for peace. But Russia is not listening.”

I thank the Government for their swift response and hope that our unwavering actions will help bring an end to Putin’s tyrannical behaviour, sooner rather than later.

The Deputy Speaker (Baroness Barker) (LD): My Lords, the noble Lord, Lord Campbell-Savours, is taking part remotely, and I invite him to speak now.

1.23 pm

Lord Campbell-Savours (Lab) [V]: My Lords, the unthinkable is happening as this tragedy unfolds. It was the danger of such conflict at the heart of Europe that motivated my three, criticised interventions in our Chamber in recent weeks. I need to make it clear that I am not some peacenik. In the Commons, I supported intervention in the Falklands, and in the case of Iraq I visited Washington on three occasions to lobby for varying forms of military intervention.

Moscow has known for weeks that there was no desire in European capitals or Washington for an interventionist military strategy. It was that division within European defence establishments that signalled weakness and lack of resolve. The moment we signalled that division, compromise was inevitable. It was with that in mind that I repeatedly called for an alternative solution that offered a way forward. I suggested that we sought to negotiate an agreed-timescale, non-NATO membership Ukraine, along with buffer-state protectorate status under Ukraine sovereignty for Donetsk and Luhansk. Mine has been a lone voice. In my view, at that stage that was the only way forward.

I believe there is a complete misunderstanding in Europe of the consequences of heaping humiliation on a proud Russian people and a volatile Putin who fears democracy, as the noble Lord, Lord Robertson of Port Ellen, said. They are a people riddled with insecurity following the loss of 25 million in the Second World War. That loss still breeds insecurity throughout Russia, a factor Russia’s leadership feeds on. It has been inevitable since the fall of the Soviet Union that Russia would seek to secure protection from an illusory NATO threat from behind a barrier of buffer states—referred to by the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts—stretching from Finland in the north, through Belarus to Crimea in the south, the only countries excluded from this defensive strategy being Estonia and Latvia, which, strategically and militarily, are of little consequence. While all these developments have been taking place in recent years, Russia has constructed a new trading relationship with China while concentrating its western trade on oil supply, knowing the theatre: the greater the dependence, the less likelihood of obstruction of its foreign policy aims. The strategy could be said to have worked. We are now paying the price for our misplaced trust and naivety.

However, that is all in the past. Where do we go from here? We should proceed with caution. Putin is seeking to put in place a puppet regime. We should avoid precipitate

action and plan, but not yet implement, much of the programme of penalties proposed in yesterday’s Statement to Parliament, which I support. We need to give Putin’s people time to reflect and consider the potential response of their own people to international condemnation. While Russia is perfectly capable of withstanding unimaginable levels of suffering, common sense may well ultimately prevail among its people, many of whom have a close affinity with people in the West. I do not believe that the Russian people want the indefinite occupation of Ukraine.

I believe that with the threat of onerous sanctions and with the settlement I have previously outlined—to repeat: no NATO membership for Ukraine and an agreement on sensitive treatment of Russian minorities in the eastern provinces under protectorate status within an independent Ukraine—we might be able to end this confrontation. Like the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, I am not convinced that an erratic Putin is trying to rebuild the former Soviet Union of satellite states. He wants buffer states. We all need to understand the internal contradictions, strains and anxieties that hold modern Russia together. Conflict would be a heavy price to pay for us all when an alternative way forward may still offer a glimmer of hope.

In light of recent events, our defence position under a strong NATO has my support. In terms of popular support in Russia, I suspect Mr Putin is about to meet his Waterloo.

1.28 pm

Lord Alderdice (LD): My Lords, I remind the House of my interests noted in the register, particularly those at Oxford with the Changing Character of War Centre and the Centre for the Resolution of Intractable Conflict. I thank my colleagues there for some very helpful conversations in recent days about the current crisis.

It is ironic and appropriate that our sitting today was opened by the right reverend Prelate the Bishop of Coventry, whose diocese and city stand as a symbol and reminder of the horror and destruction of war, as well as of the better spirit that can help us through it. I fear that today we may be looking down a long, dark tunnel, not just for the people of Ukraine but for all of us in Europe and much more widely. In the few minutes at my disposal, I will not focus so much on the immediate moves that have been and need to be made, but on the deeper and wider consequences and perspectives that we should consider.

The first is what we have been describing as sanctions, but which is actually economic warfare. The word “sanctions” implies an authority that imposes punishment consequent on the breach of rules. The global authority to which we should be able to look to impose, or at least approve, such sanctions is the Security Council of the United Nations, and it cannot do so. For years, the United States has shown less than full regard for the UN, and not only is Russia one of the other permanent, veto-wielding powers and is not going to vote for sanctions against itself but it is clear from statements in the past 24 hours that China is not prepared to use its vote to put pressure on Russia. This means that we do not have a functioning rules-based global order. That rules-based order is broken, and we do not know how, or even whether, it can be fixed.

[LORD ALDERDICE]

More locally, the European project that emerged from the wreckage of the last world war seems to have been based on the assumption that such an international rules-based order could be maintained without the substantial military power that would protect it from internal and external threats. When, some years ago, I was invited to speak at the German military academy, I was deeply dismayed to discover that Germany simply had no serious military capacity—a situation confirmed in recent days by a senior figure in the German military.

Indeed, apart from the limited and somewhat hollowed-out capacities of Britain and France, Europe does not really have the ability to protect itself without the NATO umbrella provided largely by the United States of America. This is a fundamental weakness that cannot be repaired quickly, and cannot be repaired at all unless there is an acceptance in our understanding of human nature that, while there are human beings on this earth, there will be not only the possibility but the inevitability of war. It will never be a thing of the past, especially if we do not have both the will and the means to maintain a relative degree of peace, freedom and order.

I will set aside the question of full kinetic warfare with Russia, not because it is impossible or even unlikely but because it is a question for another day—one that must take into account the clear and serious threat of a nuclear response, as voiced by President Putin.

I return to sanctions and what they mean. Since, as I say, there is no globally accepted authority to which we can turn in this situation, we are talking about economic warfare. We can, as we have, implement a ban on the Russian airline Aeroflot. But the next day, Russia imposes a ban not only on British Airways but on any airline operating from the United Kingdom. We call for a ban on products. How will our farmers manage, for example, if 80% of the world production of ammonium nitrate is under Mr Putin's control?

Thankfully, Germany has put a hold on Nord Stream 2, but it is not even operational so does not have an immediate impact on current supplies of gas. On the other hand, when we call for a blockade on Russia's access to SWIFT, what is the immediate impact when Germany cannot use that mechanism, as it currently does, to pay for its current gas supplies? Given that our people have been suffering from high energy prices—there has been much debate on it in recent weeks—it seems to me that we need to explain to our people that, in rightly going down this road, we are engaging in an inevitable tit-for-tat conflict in which we will have to accept considerable pain not for a year or two, as with Covid, but potentially for many years, for this conflict with Russia will last.

Are we able to protect our own infrastructure from the inevitable hiking up of cyberattacks, not just on this place but on our electricity, water and other utility supplies, and from the cutting of the undersea cables that facilitate internet communications? Has the Royal Navy been given instructions to board Russian vessels off our coast? Have we been talking to the Irish Government about the fact that there are Russian vessels in their waters? Are we able to board? Would this be seen as an act of kinetic warfare? We need to think about these things; otherwise, we will suddenly find ourselves sprung into a problem.

We are living in a nadir of western liberal democracy. Let us hope that we are living in a post-world war world, as we hoped, and not in a pre-world war world, as we may be.

1.33 pm

Baroness Rawlings (Con): My Lords, many years ago Zbig Brzezinski said that

“without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine suborned and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire.”

Since Peter the Great, Russia has craved to be part of Europe; it cannot be without Ukraine. President Zelensky said that

“in today's world, where we live, there is no longer someone else's war. None of you can feel safe ... a war in Ukraine ... is a war in Europe.”

As my friend, the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, explained so clearly, President Putin's real fear is the encroachment of democracy on Russian borders.

My few words today concern Bulgaria, a democratic country that I have been interested in and involved with since the fall of the Berlin Wall. The unintended consequences and the present dilemma we face are what I fear. The aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has far-reaching geopolitical consequences. It is also a provocation against the democratic countries on the eastern flank of NATO, and most importantly against countries that are less talked about but at the same time, as it may well turn out, more vulnerable to Russian provocations than those to which at present we usually give priority.

Only a few days ago, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov flagrantly questioned Bulgaria and Romania's membership of NATO, thus putting in question the free choice of the citizens of these two NATO countries, which have long been our democratic allies. Worryingly, military activities are today being conducted closer and closer to Bulgaria and Romania.

It is a fact that in the very first hours of the Russian aggression, most of the victims fell around the city of Odessa, to the south of which live 300,000 members of a Bulgarian minority closely related to Bulgaria. Any moment now, we could expect a huge humanitarian crisis and serious waves of refugees that could make our Bulgarian allies face even greater challenges. I applaud my noble friend Lord Cormack's speech regarding the importance of the BBC World Service, since it was always a lifeline for Bulgaria before the wall came down.

It is for this reason that I call for a categorical and uttermost expression of our solidarity and support for the countries on the south edge of the eastern flank of NATO. It is tragic that the West has allowed Russia to behave in this historically barbaric way in our modern times. I urge the Minister, before it is too late, to make certain that Bulgaria, a faithful NATO ally ever since she shed her Soviet yoke, is not forgotten.

1.37 pm

Baroness Wheatcroft (CB): My Lords, the speeches we have heard today, including the remarkable maiden speech of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, have eloquently described the horror we all feel at the outrage in Ukraine and the need for a united response.

Putin has shown total contempt for the West and our democratic values, but what are those values? Too often they seem financial rather than moral. The UK has made life too easy for Putin and his Kremlin cronies. The sanctions being imposed now are welcome—although the first response was embarrassingly inadequate—but, as others have said, they must go deeper and be sustained. Much of the damage has already been done, in part by a UK that welcomed Russian money, often from the most dubious sources.

There used to be reason to be proud of the City of London, its banks and its professional firms. That surely can no longer be the case. The rot set in years ago. Since 2005, 39 Russian companies have listed on the London Stock Exchange, raising \$44 billion. Much of that cash has gone to enriching Putin's apparatchiks. But there have been only three listings since 2014—most of the Russian people's assets had already been shared around the oligarchs, parcelled up and brought to London to be turned into cash. Instead, the 24 Russian companies currently listed need to be carefully investigated.

Freezing the assets of the Russian banks is only a start. The huge fees paid to bankers, lawyers and accountants to bring companies to market seemed an incentive for them to see the best, not the worst, in those companies. Now we need to be assured that these companies properly deserve a listing on our stock market. If the answer is no, investors from the UK will suffer, but their pain will be little in comparison with that of the people of Ukraine. We need Putin and his allies to be hurt.

We also have to look at the highly commercial approach of some of our major law firms. The noble Baroness, Lady Kramer, was among those to point out the failings that have led to London's reputation as the favourite laundromat for dirty money. Last month, for instance, Mishcon de Reya, one of our major law firms, was fined £232,000 for serious breaches of the money laundering rules, but my Google search for "Mishcon de Reya" and "money laundering" only brought that up as the second result; what came first was the firm's offer of services to companies on advice on dealing with money laundering regulations. It points out that it has on its staff Russian-speaking lawyers who are ready to help.

The noble Lord, Lord McDonald of Salford, spoke of the long-term pain that the UK may have to endure to help Ukraine. I believe that the City of London should be prepared to bear its share. It is time not just for more new regulations but for a change of culture. While our lax attitude to Russian riches has empowered Putin's cronies, our laxness in another area has helped him destabilise the West. Russia's interference in our election and referendum process was highlighted in the Intelligence and Security Committee's Russia report. We now see the need for a united European approach to dealing with security issues. It may or may not be the case that Russian propaganda bots influenced the decision over Brexit, but it is now mighty clear that Russia wanted Brexit. We have to find a mechanism for engaging fully with the EU on security issues, and we have to be more vigilant in policing propaganda that attempts to influence our elections. Cyberwarfare was a reality even before the troops stormed into Ukraine, and we have to deal with it.

1.42 pm

Lord Balfe (Con): My Lords, I extend my congratulations to the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, who I am sure will read this in *Hansard*.

I had a letter last week from Mishcon de Reya. I thought that anyone who could afford that level of lawyer did not need me, so I deleted it unread.

I would like to correct or clarify one point. A number of people have referred to Nord Stream 2. The Germans have not cancelled it; they have interrupted its approval procedure, which is quite different. If they cancelled it they would be liable for a very large sum of money, so at the moment it is just paused.

Many of us were dismayed by what happened yesterday, particularly as in endless meetings I and others have been assured that Russia had no intention of invading Ukraine. The Russian ambassador said that to me in very clear words. As I said yesterday, either his Government did not trust him enough to tell him what they were doing or he did not know what they were doing anyway. That is not a very good start for an ambassador, is it?

We should not underestimate Putin. He was very careful: he made sure from Macron, Scholz and Biden that there would be no military intervention in support of Ukraine. He is not a fool, although sometimes we think he is; on a good day he is quite shrewd. He knew that if he invaded Ukraine we would do nothing—and we have not let him down, have we? All we are doing is having debates.

There are two countries next to Russia, Belarus and Ukraine, that are very different daughters; they remind me of "King Lear". Belarus is the dutiful daughter that represses its population, denies democracy and is the subject of much angst; it is not even a member of the Council of Europe. However, I am sorry to say that Ukraine has constantly pinpricked Russia by trying to cancel the base in Crimea, trying to mandate that only Ukrainian can be spoken—which is pretty daft if you consider the number of Russian speakers there—and all sorts of other annoyances. There has been a constant pattern of difficulty between Ukraine and Russia. I saw it playing out every time I went to the Council of Europe: the Russians sat there, pretty dumb and not doing much, while Ukraine never lost an opportunity to have a go at them. I am not surprised that Russia got pretty fed up with it.

We now move on to the field of sanctions. I do not wish to rain on the parade, but sanctions do not have a very good record. If we are going to make them work then we have to study quite hard what we want to do. The only sanctions that I know of that worked were the CoCom sanctions, and that is because the US held a very close grip on the export of technologies beyond trusted friends. So I say to the Minister that we need to look carefully at how we perform the sanctions regime, because clearly the sanctions that we appear to have announced so far will not bring anyone down in a month of Sundays. They are tokenism. Until we get to grips with Russian influence and money in London, we will not get very far. It is worth remembering that there is also quite a lot of Ukrainian billionaire money in London.

[LORD BALFE]

I say to the Minister that we need to start from the point where we are now. The most important thing for us to do is to get a common position on the NATO members in the east, because they are different. We have to defend them. We have to assure the Baltics, Poland, Bulgaria and Romania that they are part of the family, and we defend the family. That is what our priority should be now, not only chasing the Russians but making sure that we can reassure our other friends.

1.48 pm

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (GP): My Lords, I seek as always to add new points to the debate, so I will simply mark my agreement with the noble Lords who have stressed the many actions that we need to take to get our own house in order in the wake of decades of welcoming oligarchs, plutocrats and corruption into the very heart of our society. The Russia report concluded that we do not know how much influence international interference had, on elections in particular, because we have not looked. The response that I received from the Government this week when I queried the lack of an inquiry was a refusal even to engage with the issue. That cannot continue.

There is also an obvious direct influence through party-political funding. The Elections Bill is currently before your Lordships' House. I will be tabling an amendment to see that no individual or company can donate more than £500 to a political party or campaign. That would instantly cut off one major source of influence. Why should any rich individual or company, foreign or local, be able to buy the politics they want?

Today has to be primarily about Ukraine, its people and their suffering. Yesterday I joined many Ukrainians and their friends gathered outside Downing Street. Many were huddled anxiously over their phones, connected directly to the war zone. They were calling for action, for sanctions stronger than those announced and for protection for themselves and their relatives.

I am pleased to see that the Home Secretary has announced that Ukrainians now in the UK will be able to have their visas temporarily extended or able to switch to different visa routes, but I have direct questions about other Ukrainians. Will the Government waive the family visa income requirements for a UK spouse or partner of a Ukrainian, to enable the family to live safely together here in the UK? Will they welcome Ukrainians who seek refuge here, whatever their mode of arrival?

I extend the question to dissident Russians. Many noble Lords have noted that there has been significant protest in Russia against the attack on Ukraine. We need to highlight and amplify these brave campaigns and, should the individuals be able to find a route out, offer them refuge. In that spirit, I name Sofya Rusova, co-chair of Russia's trade union of journalists, arrested with a sign that I have seen translated as:

"War with Ukraine is Russia's disgrace".

It has been notable that many of the protesters have been women, which brings me to one of my main points. Even in your Lordships' House, security debate is overwhelmingly male-dominated and fails to take into account the interests of women and girls. It is all too often seen as a matter for military and intelligence men.

The infamous photo from the recent Munich security conference of a table of CEOs is entirely typical. I note the comments of the noble Baroness, Lady Goudie, about women peacebuilders, who often do a huge amount of the work and then get pushed out of the final photos.

Women are often the key voices of opposition. I note the opposition role of human rights activist Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya in Belarus, the nation rightly mentioned by other noble Lords for its infamous role in the attack on Ukraine. In the world today, we can see that the current approach has not worked out well. It is time for a feminist foreign policy that puts women at the heart of decision-making and has the interests of all, particularly the most vulnerable, as its goal, acknowledging that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

It is time get away from what the noble Lord, Lord Newby, rightly described as "windy talk of global Britain" and from echoes of the empire's gunboat diplomacy being trotted out in the modern world. We should be stepping up, as a supportive and collegiate member of the international community, working together with others to build security for all. Yesterday, I asked the noble Baroness the Leader of the House about the possibility of UN General Assembly action under the "uniting for peace" procedures created by Resolution 377A. She promised a report back from New York from the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, so I look forward to that later. The COP climate talks, in which some of the world's smallest nations have a major voice, can be a model here.

Time rushes on, so I have one final point to make about our use of resources for security. I doubt that anyone was surprised when the noble Lord, Lord West, proposed more spending on ships and guns, but we are of course in the age of hybrid warfare. What about spending on education in media literacy and being able to stand up against the kind of social media disinformation that has been so evident to us all? I am sure that many have seen the step-up in bots that I have seen on my Twitter feed. What about reinvestment in international aid and, as the noble Baroness, Lady Sheehan, said, in energy security?

As the noble Lord, Lord Browne of Ladyton, outlined, we will never be safe until we have a world free of nuclear weapons, which is what the majority of the world's countries want.

1.53 pm

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-Aff): My Lords, I agree with what other noble Lords have said about President Putin's disastrous behaviour and the need for sanctions adequate to bring him and his cronies down, so I will not repeat it now.

But, if you want to know how you got to where you are, it often helps to look at where you have been. I fear that we have handled the Russian bear very short-sightedly since the Berlin Wall came down in 1989. We would not be where we are today if we had behaved more generously toward the Russian people over the last 31 years.

I regard the Russian people as my friends because, during my teenage years in the 1950s, my mentor in life was Fred Cripps, Stafford Cripps' elder brother, who had lived in Russia for several years before the

revolution in 1917. He told me that the Russian peoples were rare because, like us and the Dutch, they had a sense of humour and could laugh at themselves—so they should have been our friends, even then.

I also had the huge privilege of meeting Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in 1983, six years before the Berlin Wall came down, so I was inspired to do what I could to support his dissident network inside the Soviet Union and help a number of Soviet Jews to escape to the West. One thing that you did not do within the hearing of Aleksandr Isayevich was to say “Russia” when you meant the Soviet Union, or “Russians” when you meant Soviets.

We have behaved very foolishly towards Russia since 1989 in at least two ways. First, it really seems that we broke the promise that we gave to Gorbachev that NATO would not expand to the east if the Berlin Wall came down. Secondly, we have turned down several offers from Russia to set up free trade agreements between us, from the Atlantic to the Urals, as Putin put it in one of his offers in 2014. The EU promptly replied to this offer by offering association agreements, leading to NATO membership, to Georgia, Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine.

I know that some now deny that we promised the new Russia that NATO would not expand to the east after 1989, but they should read an article in this month’s English edition of *Der Spiegel*, entitled “NATO’s Eastward Expansion: Is Vladimir Putin Right?” I will put a copy in your Lordships’ Library. They should also read an article in the *Mail on Sunday* on 22 February by Peter Hitchens, entitled, “Why I Blame the Arrogant, Foolish West” for the crisis in Ukraine. For good measure, they should also read “We Blew Our Chance to Befriend Putin”, by Mr Rod Liddle, in the *Spectator* of 19 February—

Noble Lords: Oh!

Lord Pearson of Rannoch (Non-Afl): Noble Lords laugh, but they clearly do not know this. The article puts the crisis into its broader historical context. I will put copies of both these articles in your Lordships’ Library as well, and I trust that those who have been sniggering will read them.

I have time to mention one other point on why the Russian people have been uniquely disadvantaged since 1989. None of the countries that lived under communism had access to what we call civil society—no freedom of speech, no independent judiciary, no charities, no free market, no private insurance and no democracy. When we set up our know-how funds in 1990 to help the peoples thus enslaved to recover these vital things, I served on our initiative in Poland to help the newly liberated Poles to set up a free insurance market. I was lucky because we could find Poles who remembered civil society, including life and other insurance, for example, from before 1945—before the Iron Curtain cut them off from the civilised world. So, we were able to help them to resurrect it without too much difficulty. It was not so in the then-new Russia, whose people had been deprived of civil society for another whole generation—another 45 years. So, you could not find anyone there who remembered it. So, once again, the Russian people were on the wrong side of history.

I conclude by agreeing with noble Lords who think that Putin may have taken leave even of his KGB senses, that he is not supported by the majority of the Russian people and that, if we and others can impose sanctions that are stiff enough, we may be able to bring him and his cronies down. We could then work for a new and prosperous relationship with the Russian people, who remain our natural friends.

1.59 pm

Baroness McIntosh of Pickering (Con): My Lords, I support the government response to the Ukrainian situation that we have seen thus far. I join others in welcoming the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, and congratulating him on his fantastic contribution—his excellent maiden speech—today. We look forward to many such contributions.

Two events close to me stand out for me. One is that my mother, having been born and brought up in Denmark, lived for a number of years under German occupation, and her generation was scarred by that experience. The second is that I was in Berlin in November 1989, the day the Berlin Wall came down. I felt the euphoria of all Germans—indeed, all Europeans—as expressed on that day.

Today, we stand in solidarity with Ukraine. What I find perhaps most deeply disturbing is that an independent sovereign nation state purely expressing the desire to join a defence organisation, NATO, and an economic organisation, the European Union, has led to the act of aggression and war that we have seen. No remarks could be more apposite than those made today by the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of York about the Schuman plan and the foundations of the economic community that came to be known as the Common Market and the European Union as we know it today.

I ask my noble friends in the Government to respond positively on three separate issues. One is that those countries that we know have made an application under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty will have a serious consultation on their safety and protection under Article 4—and potentially, subsequently, Article 5 of the NATO treaty. I would like to hear precisely how we intend to take seriously their concerns. I welcome the reference made by my noble friend Lady Goldie, our Defence Minister, in explaining the work of the Joint Expeditionary Force. I wish it every possible success in ensuring freedom of movement in the Baltic Sea, which is of great consequence to those countries.

I look also for recognition for the work of the 75% to 80% of fruit and vegetable growers in this country who, as we heard yesterday, are from Ukraine. They provide a fantastic service to this country and enable us to put fresh fruit and vegetables on our plates. We have to ask about the future of those Ukrainian citizens here and, more importantly, that of their counterparts, their families, in Ukraine. I would very much like to hear, as well, what assessment the Government have made of the potential consequences for food supply, given the humanitarian status of Ukraine, which can go only one way in the months ahead.

The noble Lord, Lord Alton, eloquently conveyed the fears, dangers and humanitarian challenges for the refugees coming initially into Poland but from there to

[BARONESS McINTOSH OF PICKERING]

other parts of Europe. Following his remarks, I end by asking what specific aid the Government are planning to give to those refugees and what particular support might be given to Poland and other neighbouring countries at this time.

A matter of some concern to many of us in this House, and indeed the wider country, has been the successful attempts at ransomware and cyberattacks, not just on government and official bodies in this country but on private enterprises. I have witnessed one and I am sad to say that no help was given and the ransom had to be paid in that case. As the noble Lord, Lord St John of Bletso, rightly indicated, it is highly probable that we will become a target, particularly given the sanctions outlined to date, of a cyberattack. I would like to hear from the Government today precisely what action we intend to take to protect not just government bodies but private enterprises. I have no doubt that those ransoms that have been paid, and the cyberattacks that have been successful, have been used to pay for the Russian aggression that we see to date.

I would like an assurance on what the status of refugees will be and what level of humanitarian aid we intend to give, as well as a serious undertaking to consider the further protection of those seeking our help under Article 4 of the NATO treaty.

2.04 pm

Lord Davies of Brixton (Lab): My Lords, I want first to say how much I have valued the opportunity to listen to your Lordships' House and gain from the experience and profound knowledge of what has taken place. I join everyone in being clear that Putin's attack on Ukraine is an unprovoked and unjustifiable violation of international law, for which we hope he will in due time be held accountable. It breaks multiple treaties and international commitments, including the founding principles of the UN charter, which we all support. The attack on Ukraine is an attack on democracy.

We have no choice but to support the Ukrainian people, so our job today is to make that support clear and unambiguous. Conclusions on what lessons can be learned from how we arrived at this situation can be left until later but, in offering our support, it is crucial that we are honest with the Ukrainian people and with our own people. We need to tell people about the costs that will be involved. What price are we prepared to pay? What price are the people of the United Kingdom prepared to pay to support Ukraine? There is no doubt that there will be a cost, so let us not pretend otherwise. I very much welcomed the remarks of the noble Lord, Lord Tugendhat, who highlighted that issue. Effective sanctions will impact on us as well as on the Putin regime. They will have a cost. A financial cost will fall on all of us, and not just from even higher energy costs; there will also be an impact on jobs and individual incomes as effective sanctions impact on us as well as Putin.

I want to make it clear that I believe we should be prepared to meet these costs in the interest of freedom and democracy, but they must be shared fairly and the heaviest burden must fall on those with the deepest pockets. What this requires is redistribution of the burden,

and this can be achieved only by higher taxes on those who can afford to pay the most to help those with the least. We should look to those who have profited from the Covid pandemic; not least, we should look at the oil and energy companies that stand to make even greater profits from the new crisis. The case for a windfall tax is even more compelling. When the Government talk about effective sanctions, they have to make clear that they are prepared to will the means as well as the ends, while protecting those least able to pay.

There is, however, another cost that we might be asked to pay: a human cost in terms of death and injury. Without taking this issue too far today, I have considerable concerns in this area, particularly given Putin's unambiguous threat to use nuclear weapons. We have treaty obligations that we must fulfil but we need deep and careful thought before we go any further. History teaches us that it is all too easy to stumble into conflict with devastating consequences.

2.08 pm

Lord Walney (CB): My Lords, I am pleased to follow the contribution from the noble Lord, Lord Davies of Brixton. Russia should surely now be expelled from the Council of Europe, as the noble Lord, Lord Anderson of Swansea, mentioned. It should also be expelled from the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. President Putin's invasion has flagrantly violated the founding principles of both organisations by attacking a fellow member. Some will say that Russia should remain in these bodies to facilitate future diplomacy and dialogue, but of what value is that when Putin's comprehensive strategy of lies and deceit has weaponised the channels of diplomacy against his adversaries? Perhaps more will question whether it matters either way, as both bodies have arguably lacked direction and purpose for some time.

With the removal of Russia's permanent seat on the UN Security Council not being an option, its expulsion from the European community would be a worthwhile signal that Putin has made this great nation a pariah in the eyes of all those who are now threatened by it. Conversely, keeping Russia among the ranks of those which it threatens risks sending the opposite signal: namely, that the democracies Putin threatens remain weak and could be further bullied. More importantly, removing the common threat from the ranks of these bodies could free up either or both of them to play a role in the restructuring of European security, which a number of noble Lords have pointed out is now necessary and urgent.

Strengthening NATO is vital, as many noble Lords have said today. However, these tragic events have shown the grave gap that exists for European neighbours on Russia's borders that are not NATO members. This must not be centred simply on the European Union. Indeed, we must now take active steps to widen this. Too often, recent discussions on the UK's involvement in Europe's defence and security approach have become a lament for Brexit. But we need to make the case that it is not in our neighbours' interests to keep any European nation on the sidelines in the face of this common threat—particularly given the scale of the UK's capability and will to act. It is absolutely down to us to show that we are willing to re-engage on a

sustained basis to take diplomacy and our European alliances seriously, in a way that we have perhaps not in recent years. As we do that, there is a responsibility and a need for our EU allies to find a way of working that can maximise the contribution of the UK and other allies which have chosen a different economic and political path to the European Union.

2.12 pm

Lord Trefgarne (Con): My Lords, I of course share the views already expressed on the appalling nature of the events that have taken place in eastern Europe and, in particular, in Ukraine.

Exactly 40 years ago this year, the Argentinians invaded and briefly occupied the Falkland Islands. The response of the United Kingdom, in accordance with Resolution 503 of the Security Council—which, incidentally, the Russians did not veto—and, above all, the views and wishes of the Falkland islanders, was to recover the islands militarily. This was achieved after a brief Argentinian occupation. The view of the Falkland islanders is known to remain unchanged. However, recent remarks from some Argentinian sources suggest that the islands are once more at risk. To make matters worse, the Chinese authorities have recently made a public statement supporting the Argentinians in this matter. Against this background, the Argentinians perhaps imagine that Her Majesty's Government are presently distracted by other matters—those we are debating today—and might therefore choose this moment to launch a new attack on the Falkland Islands while Her Majesty's Government are looking the other way, so to speak.

I therefore ask the Minister, when he comes to respond, to confirm that the Government are aware of recent Argentinian remarks and statements, and that he can confirm that our policy concerning the Falkland Islands remains unchanged. Thus, exactly as in 1982, the views and wishes of the Falkland islanders will be paramount.

I apologise for this brief digression from the main subject of our debate. I of course share the view of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Ukraine. However, we cannot ignore threats elsewhere in the world.

2.14 pm

Viscount Stansgate (Lab): My Lords, this has been a very serious debate, full of the most enormous range of experience from all parts of the House. It is a situation that none of us thought we would ever live to see in today's modern world. I begin by paying tribute to the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, who sadly has just left his place. His serious and well-informed contribution has made an obvious impact on all of us who have been here today.

I belong to the generation that grew up in a western Europe that was free from the scourge of war, thanks to the sacrifice of the previous generation, which in my family's case included the death of my own uncle as a fighter pilot in 1944—and the Russian people too made enormous sacrifices that we should not forget. But, of course, we are not in conflict with the Russian people, and we must make that clear in every way we can.

One of the most important things we can do is to support those brave people in Russia—and they really are brave—who are at this very moment protesting against what is being done in their name, and of course the brave people of the Ukraine who are risking life and limb to defend their own independence.

I believe the key issue that faces us now is to rethink the security arrangements for Europe. The world now knows that President Putin was lying when he said he was not planning to invade Ukraine; we simply cannot trust anything that he and his regime have to say. But we must urgently reconsider the security arrangements for Europe: the recent integrated defence review needs another look. We might once have thought that warfare based on tanks, weaponry and so on would not occur on the continent of Europe in our lifetime, but I am not sure the Baltic states share that view at the moment, and our national security strategy should certainly be reassessed in the light of what we are now living through. Younger generations, many of whom have probably never thought about it, are going to have to wake up to the need to take defence seriously in the face of the threat of Russian aggrandisement, and they need to become aware of the costs involved. They need to understand the risk to our democracies if we are not prepared to make a stand, and that you cannot take peace for granted: this is a debate the country needs to have.

This brings me on to sanctions. The House is united in its support for the sanctions that have been announced, and the leader of my party has made that very clear. But we know that, while they must be applied and sustained by the widest possible range of countries, on their own they will not be enough to stop what is currently happening. We must also be honest about the consequences of those sanctions. Yes, we want them to work—we want to cut Russia out of the western financial system, because that would be a severe penalty—but sanctions will also hurt us, and millions of people will realise this as the price of gas rises, both here and in Europe. When the Minister, at the beginning of her speech, referred to the decision of the Germans on Nord Stream 2, there were perceptible cries of "Hear, hear!" across the House, because we all recognise that this decision involves a sacrifice for Germany. The decision it took is credible, and we too must face up to the need to make our sanctions credible. Here I must say, frankly, that the UK's credibility on sanctions, especially financial sanctions, is undermined by the reputation of London as the laundromat for Russian money.

We know that, over recent years, many rich Russians have been welcomed to London, and they have treated us as a bargain basement, investing in, and buying up, everything from football clubs to private education places and highly expensive homes. It is hardly surprising that some of our citizens cannot even find a basement of their own in central London as a result. On sanctions, the message must be that we must clean up our act, and my message to any political party that accepts Russian money is to hand back those roubles.

Next, we need to consider the way we can use our power, and there are different ways in which we can do this. We should certainly continue to make our case at

[VISCOUNT STANSGATE]

the United Nations, despite the vetoes. We can support the brave Ukrainians with weapons—but there are risks even in this area, as Putin's threats make clear. We must use our soft power to the maximum extent, including the BBC and the World Service, to explain to the Russian people what is happening and why. We need the BBC's reputation as a trusted source of information and we need to use social media and deploy cyber countermeasures, because this is a war of information as well as a war of weapons. If I may say so, although others may disagree, I think we should leave Russia Today to broadcast, because we are a democratic society that is strong enough to withstand some of the absurdly pro-Putin propaganda it puts out. Besides, if we ban it, Russia would ban the BBC, and what would be the point in that?

To conclude, I think that President Putin has made a major mistake in what he has done, but, like President Biden, I have no idea what is in his mind. If it is the case that he wants to recreate the Soviet empire, he is on the wrong side of history and it may be that this invasion will come to be seen as the beginning of the end for his regime. I, for one, hope it will be.

2.20 pm

Lord Carlile of Berriew (CB): My Lords, it is a great privilege to have been present for the brilliant maiden speech by my noble friend Lord Sedwill. His presence in this House promises much for future debates. Of course, our debates are often characterised by both who is present and who is not. It is a matter of regret to me that my noble friend Lord Lebedev—of Hampton and Siberia—is not in his place today. It would have been of interest to your Lordships, I think, to hear his insights into the dystopic situation that has developed in Ukraine.

In 1940, just after the end of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, a woman called Frederika Katzner left the city in which she spent the first 26 years of her life. It was then called Lwów and was in Poland. Following the Yalta conference it became Lviv, and has been in Ukraine for a very long time. Until the outbreak of the Second World War, Lwów—or Lviv—was a sophisticated, attractive, Habsburgian city, with a large, diverse population, including a very large number of Jews, of whom Frederika Katzner was one. It was cosmopolitan and sophisticated. In 1990, 50 years later, she returned for the first time with me, her son. In 1990, Lviv was just emerging from the post-Yalta Soviet subjugation. It was still beautiful but down at heel. The currency comprised one-sided coupons, the best value for which was obtained from student entrepreneurs in the black market. We bought tickets for the ballet, which cost us \$2.

My most recent visit to Lviv was in 2019. By then, it was a thriving, lively city, full of young people from Germany, Austria, Russia and other countries, there to enjoy themselves. It was indubitably a city in a single nation. There were democratic campaigning posters, typical of what we see around London—many written by students who were very active. It was very much part of an expectant and ambitious democracy, which it became. The last thing that the citizens I witnessed in Lviv appeared to want was to be dominated

by a new Russian hegemony. Yet the city of my mother and her family—our family—has now been usurped again by a deluded, demonic, dystopian despot.

I support all the actions that have been taken by the Government so far to try to bring down this outrage by the use of every economic sanction we can find. I hope that what appears to be the Prime Minister's wish, that SWIFT should be removed from the Russians, should come about within hours or days, not weeks or months.

We have heard some submissions in this debate about money laundering in London. I should say to those who have rightly criticised that—including in the very good speech by the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, who spoke just before me—and the actions of some law firms, that it is probably fair to say that there is a host of law firms that have been involved in these activities. I suggest to the Minister that we should now create a register of lawyers' activities for Russian citizens and their strong connections as an adjunct to the new National Security and Investment Act system, which was introduced in recent weeks. I and others would be happy to discuss with the Government how that might take place.

I am involved, as the register tells us, in a strategy consultancy which does work for clients from all over the world. I had the privilege of turning down a proposed contract from a Russian not so long ago on ethical grounds—it certainly reminded me how much Russian money there is in London sloshing around in accounts, some of dubious propriety.

I also ask the Minister to look at the international situation. Reuters has reported today that India is exploring setting up rupee trade accounts with Russia to soften the effect of sanctions and enable it to trade with Russia. Reuters is usually right on these economic issues. I urge the Government to ensure that, when we deal with the Russians over this terrible tragedy, we ensure that friendly countries go with us.

2.25 pm

Lord Owen (Ind SD): My Lords, as we debate, people are laying down their lives for the freedom of their country. I know we all respect that very greatly. We are helped in doing so by the serious tone of this debate, particularly the contribution of the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, who is very welcome.

The noble Lord, Lord Robertson, who knows the President of Russia very well and has met him, pointed to what he believes is a change, and to what has changed him. Quite apart from power, which tends to change people, there is a contempt and hubristic mendacity about him which is alarming and needs serious study.

There is also a possibility that he has made a grave mistake. It is very noticeable how little time he has spent trying to convince his own people about this invasion, unlike the tragedy of eight years ago. We signed a guarantee of the territorial boundaries of this country. Our response to that attack on another country was disgraceful, negligible and lamentable. It shook me so much that I gave up doing business in Russia. It was very clear that, from that moment on, we were dealing with a different Russia.

However, I strongly support the many noble Lords in this Chamber who have fulfilled a Churchillian attitude to Russia—engaging with it at all times and respecting its people. We must not turn our anger at what is being done by the present President against the people of Russia.

What is there new to say? The one point I want to leave the House with is this: do not believe that this is the end of the story. In 1977, after a six-year lapse of any contact, I spent time in Moscow negotiating and talking with President Brezhnev and Foreign Minister Gromyko. At times, particularly on a social occasion with Gromyko, the atmosphere turned very nasty when they argued that our signature on the Helsinki Final Act meant that we had accepted that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would be incorporated into the then Soviet Union. I argued back very toughly, but I was left with a deep-seated impression that this view would still be held by a lot of people in Russia—and it is certainly held, in my view, by the present President. We ought to look at this very seriously.

He has already placed nuclear weapons in the enclave of Kaliningrad. There was an ominous tone to his speech—he clearly did not mention nuclear weapons but everybody knew exactly what he meant—on what would happen if we changed our position and started to fight, which I think we could not and would be wrong to do. NATO is a defensive organisation; it cannot embark on this intervention. But if we do not take this warning seriously now, who knows what will happen in future?

I do not think it is of anywhere near the same seriousness to those Russians who want a large empire to try to now take the battle to those three states. I do not think they will do it immediately anyhow. But what are we going to do? I have listened to many debates in this House; I wish it were more powerful. Who is going to say, as the noble Lord, Lord Davies, said in a good speech, that there is a financial cost to what has happened in Ukraine? This Government increased defence when they came into office. It was a praiseworthy decision. They did something more: they gave a four-year guarantee to the Ministry of Defence that that was going to be its budget. The Chancellor will no doubt feel he ought to hold that, but no. Two years in, we have to increase defence now and we have to do it with direct evidence of what we have seen. There is now, for the first time, I believe, a leader of Russia who would contemplate using nuclear weapons without any great concern—even Stalin, I do not think, would have lightly embarked on using nuclear weapons. I think this man could do so. We need much more evidence than what we have seen over the last few days.

I wanted to say something else in this Chamber, although my time is up: thank goodness for President Biden and his extremely good Secretary of State. They have bound NATO together in a way that has been missing for many years. I hope we will stop any form of criticism. I never believed a word of any criticism over Afghanistan; we had lost in Afghanistan. Let us think very carefully about our next few steps, but it will demand sacrifices from the people of this country if we are serious, and woe betide us if we are not.

2.32 pm

Baroness Smith of Newnham (LD): My Lords, I stand in support of Ukraine and of our values, as the noble Lord, Lord Robathan, exhorted us to do earlier. It is perhaps a sign of the importance of this debate—and of the global situation—that there has been close to unanimity across all sides of your Lordships' House about the gravity of the situation, the enormity of what the United Kingdom needs to do and how far we are all willing to go to achieve that.

It is a convention in this House very often to say that one is delighted to speak after the last person who spoke, but I am particularly pleased to speak after the noble Lord, Lord Owen, because his comments were so important. He also raised a point that had not been made in the previous five hours, which was about just how strong NATO under Biden can be. That is important and builds on suggestions at earlier stages across your Lordships' House from my noble friend Lord Newby and the noble Lords, Lord Walney and Lord Cormack, about Europe speaking with one voice. One of the things that is crucial at present is that Europe responds as one, the West responds as one, and—as far as possible—the international community responds as one. The noble Lord, Lord Kerr of Kinlochard, suggested that perhaps we needed to talk to former Soviet satellites, countries that might suddenly realise how vulnerable they are going to be if Putin really is looking to rebuild a Soviet empire. As many others have suggested, including international historians like Margaret MacMillan and Niall Ferguson, perhaps he is not looking so much to the Soviet Union as to the former Russian Empire.

Very clearly, we need the strongest possible sanctions. For days, these Benches have been calling for the Government to do more and saying that we do not think they have done enough. Obviously more sanctions were announced yesterday. They were important, but do they go as far as the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, called for in his maiden speech? We have heard much about his maiden speech, which was indeed important. Are the sanctions really going to be ratcheted up sufficiently to make a difference to Putin? We agreed the statutory instrument yesterday and the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary then talked about further sanctions, so one of the questions I would like the Minister to focus on is: what other legislation needs to be introduced and what other matters need to be legislated on? Does the Minister have a list? Can he tell us when that is coming forward? Can he take back to the Prime Minister that your Lordships' House, I believe, and the other place would be willing to sit longer, later, more days and closer to Easter to get through all the legislation we need to? Pushing this back beyond Easter is not appropriate, because these sanctions need to be in place as soon as possible.

We have heard much about Russian money in this country. When we were looking for European sanctions at the time of the Crimea crisis in 2014, one of the issues was that the French were perhaps a little reluctant to stop arms sales to Russia, Germany was a little reluctant to stop Nord Stream 2, and the United Kingdom was perhaps too reluctant to stop Russian money in the City of London. As my noble friend Lady Kramer pointed out, we are seen as the London laundromat.

[BARONESS SMITH OF NEWNHAM]

Can that stop immediately? How quickly can this be done? We cannot let these sanctions drag on and worry about whether certain individuals might have deep pockets for lawyers. We need to make sure that assets are frozen as soon as possible, so what are the Government doing to ensure that this can be done very swiftly?

I believe that I and all other noble Lords who have spoken this afternoon are standing up for our values of democracy and the international rule of law, yet my noble friend Lord Alderdice in—as always—a very powerful speech suggested that perhaps we were not: that the call for sanctions was not internationally permitted because they were not being put through the United Nations, and that we were therefore talking about engaging in economic warfare. I am not calling for any sort of warfare; I do not believe these Benches are. We clearly need economic sanctions but, by definition, a UN Security Council with a permanent member state—with a veto—which is the protagonist in this incursion into Ukraine will never vote for sanctions. I hope we will all support the international order but still accept the need for sanctions.

As the noble Lord, Lord Tugendhat, pointed out in his important speech, and as my noble friend Lord Alderdice raised, we need to be absolutely clear not just in this Chamber—talking to ourselves, and maybe talking to members of our businesses, universities or political parties—but in this country that by standing up to Russia and standing up for Ukraine, the costs of these sanctions are not just going to hit Putin, his cronies or Russian businesses. They will impact on all of us. They will impact on energy and gas prices, but that has to be a price we are willing to pay to ensure freedom in Europe.

There is a price for that freedom, but by dealing with this through sanctions and economic means, we can try to ensure that we, as a sovereign country and a NATO member, do not find ourselves tripping into war. That could be existential because, as several noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Browne of Ladyton, and my noble friend Lady Northover, have pointed out, Putin has made it very clear that he does not rule out using nuclear weapons. We cannot get into a war but we must ensure the rights and freedoms of Ukraine.

Finally, several noble Lords, in particular my noble friends Lady Ludford and Lady Sheehan and the noble Baroness, Lady Bennett of Manor Castle, talked about refugees. In her opening remarks, the noble Baroness, Lady Goldie, talked about humanitarian aid for Ukraine. How far will that go? How generous are Her Majesty's Government willing to be to support those who are internally displaced or who, more likely, will very soon be in Poland and the Baltic states? In his reply, can the Minister tell us—it seems like an echo of everything we have been saying about Afghanistan for the last six months—that the MoD, the FCDO and the Home Office are speaking as one? Are they working together to ensure that we will have an open and generous package for refugees and that visas will be available for Ukrainians and maybe, as the noble Baroness, Lady Bennett, suggested, for Russian dissidents? There are people in Russia who are standing up against

Putin. As several noble Lords have pointed out, we should respect Russia and the Russians, even if we do not respect Putin and we think that what he is doing is fundamentally wrong.

Like everybody else, we on these Benches believe that we need to stand and support Ukraine. We need to do it collectively with our European and NATO allies. We support what the Government have done so far, but we now perhaps need them to go a little further.

2.42 pm

Lord Coaker (Lab): My Lords, what a privilege it is to speak on behalf of Her Majesty's Opposition in this historic debate. I start by congratulating the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, on his maiden speech. We were all informed by it and that is what is important, as the noble Lords, Lord King and Lord Owen, pointed out.

This Chamber may be a revising Chamber, but the experience of the Members who come here informs the policy of Her Majesty's Government in a way that makes for better legislation and better decision-making when it comes to historic and momentous events such as those which we are debating here today. To have former diplomats of the quality we have mentioned and former military officers, including those who have served at the highest level, informing these debates is of extreme importance. Alongside that, we have Members from the Church and those who have worked in humanitarian roles. All bring relevant experience to this debate, which can only help inform us on what are, to be fair to the Government—this would be the case whoever was in government—immensely difficult decisions as to the best way forward. There is no division between us—or 99.9% of us—but there is of course debate and discussion, even within government, on the best way forward.

I start by saying to the Government, as did my noble friend Lady Smith last night, that we stand four-square with them in supporting the actions they have taken in respect of Ukraine and trying to deter the aggression from Russia. That is a really important message for the noble Baroness, Lady Goldie, who introduced this debate with her usual clarity and provided information for us all. I thank her again for that. No doubt the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, will follow in that as well when he responds to this wide-ranging debate.

I will say just a few words of introduction. On days like this, people talk about rhetoric. Sometimes it is important. Sometimes words matter. People across the world will hear what is being said in this Chamber, one of the historic debating Chambers of the world. In this historic debate, words and voices should ring out from this Chamber in rightful condemnation of President Putin and support for the people of Ukraine—indeed, for all those fighting for freedom, including, as we heard from the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, and others, the brave people we are seeing in pictures from Moscow and other cities in Russia protesting about the war. One can only imagine the bravery of those people in doing that.

As we have done throughout our proud history, we stand on the side of democracy, human rights and freedom. In the end, are those not what President

Putin fears more than anything else? Going back again to the brilliant speech of the noble Lord, Lord Robertson, as well as the remarks made by the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, and the noble Lord, Lord Tugendhat, is it not democracy and freedom on the doorstep of Russia that frighten President Putin more than anything else? When the people of Russia look out to the way in which human rights are respected in an independent, democratic Ukraine, is that not what frightens him? Is that not what undermines his system—in many ways, more than tanks and military campaigns can?

Today is a day of many words. We have heard many great speeches but the words from this Chamber will echo around the world and across Europe. Let the people of Ukraine hear loudly and clearly that we stand with them, as we do with everybody across eastern Europe. Your fight is our fight. Your struggle is our struggle. Your battle is our battle. All of us thought—indeed, hoped—that the dark days of the past had gone. As the noble Baroness, Lady Hayter, sought to remind us, we believed that one state aggressively invading another in Europe had been consigned to the dustbin of history along with the enormous human cost, as millions of lives were lost to establish this principle in Europe and across the world.

However, let Russia and its ally, Belarus, know that we will do everything in our power with our allies to stand up once again for international law and the right to national self-determination. More than anything else, alongside our debates about sanctions, the best way forward and all those things, these issues of principle need to ring out from this Chamber so that they are heard loud and clear across Europe, in Russia and around the world. We are proud to stand for that. It is our history and we are proud to remind everybody of it.

Specifically, we support the Government on sanctions. No doubt the Government will seek ways to extend those sanctions and make them more effective; they have our support in doing that. I stand with the people such as the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, who pointed out that this may be a long-term measure; it will not necessarily be won in the short term. I join the noble Lords, Lord Anderson, Lord Tugendhat, Lord Adonis and Lord Davies, among others, in saying that we need to prepare the British public to understand that this is their fight as well. This is important to them. This fight for freedom matters to people on the streets of Birmingham, Glasgow, Belfast and Cardiff. Part of that cost, and part of what may happen, is that gas, electricity and petrol bills may go up. We need to be honest with people about that for them to understand that, in standing in solidarity with the people of Ukraine, that is the cost that will have to be paid. I tell noble Lords this: I do not believe that the British public will shirk from that. Never have they been found wanting when it comes to standing with other people in the defence of freedom and democracy across the world; I do not believe that they will be found wanting in this instance either.

We support the Government on sanctions and look to the Government to take what further action they can. I very much agreed with the Defence Secretary

when he pointed out on the radio this morning that we believe action should be taken on SWIFT. Speaking on behalf of the UK Government, he said that we believe that and need to persuade our international partners based in Belgium and elsewhere that it is the right thing to do. We can only wish them well with respect to that because we think that it will make a real difference.

We need to stand with the people of Ukraine. They need to understand that we will work with them. As the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, and the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, said, we must support them with military equipment—not troops—and make sure that they get the equipment they need if it comes to resistance. As we speak, we learn of hundreds of casualties. Goodness only knows what the truth is and what the consequences of shelling are. We stand with the Ukrainian people so that they know they can have equipment. If it comes to resistance, again, there will be some hard decisions for the Government about how we will support those who seek to resist a Russian occupation.

No doubt the Government will be thinking about what we do with respect to NATO and defence spending. It might be that all of us—our country, the western alliances and all those standing up for freedom and democracy across the world—will have to re-evaluate where defence comes and what we spend on it. We all thought that the dividend from the end of the Cold War meant that we did not have to spend the money we should be spending on defence—none of us wants to spend on defence if it perhaps means less for schools, health or international aid and all the things we want to spend money on. But the defence of freedom, democracy and human rights also has a cost. We have to say to our public and to each other that we have sometimes taken it for granted, and we will have to spend more to defend that freedom. I know that point has been made by many noble Lords.

The importance of NATO was pointed out by the noble Lords, Lord Campbell, Lord Alton, Lord King, Lord Robathan and Lord Walney, the noble Baronesses, Lady Meyer and Lady McIntosh, the noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, my noble friends Lord West, Lord Robertson, Lord Anderson, Lord Browne and Lord Adonis, and many others. Again, we have often taken NATO for granted. My noble friend Lord Robertson, who was Secretary-General or whatever the official title is—the leader of NATO—has reminded us constantly of NATO. But the serious point is that NATO was set up not as an aggressive alliance but as a defensive alliance, to protect the hard-won freedoms and hard-won democracy across western Europe that we take for granted. We need to be reminded of the importance of NATO and how we reinforce it. No doubt the Government will look at that.

We heard from the Minister about the additional troops, air power and no doubt ships that are being placed into countries in eastern Europe within the context of NATO. People say that that is not important. I say that, alongside what is happening in Ukraine, it is especially important for President Putin and others to recognise and realise that we mean what we say in NATO. That is why we are reinforcing the eastern borders in the countries that surround Ukraine. We believe that

[LORD COAKER]

NATO is a defensive alliance, and we mean what we say: we will defend those countries. Those countries on the border of Ukraine need to know and understand that.

I have a couple of final points. I could not agree more with noble Lords who pointed out that this is a global issue—it is Russia versus the world. The great battle of the decades to come will be between democracy and autocracy. We need to stand with those such as the ambassador from Kenya, who stood up at the United Nations—the noble Lord, Lord Ahmad, might well have been there, as he has been in the last few days—and pointed out that what was a European fight was also Kenya’s fight, because he understood that if the rule of law is undermined it has an impact. Whatever continent you happen to be on, that will undermine it. We have to take action globally.

Let this be another turning point in history. Let this be another reminder that this country, with its allies, will never turn its back on those defending freedom and democracy. Let everyone know that, however terrible these days are, we will never be cowed from doing the right thing. We will always be ready to stand with those fighting oppression. We have done so in the past and we must do so again.

2.53 pm

The Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon) (Con): My Lords, I thank all noble Lords for their insightful contributions to today’s debate. It would be remiss of me not to immediately acknowledge the tour de force of the noble Lord, Lord Coaker, and his full alignment with the Government’s position. I include in those remarks, along with my deep thanks, the noble Lord, Lord Collins. I give my personal assurance to the noble Baroness, Lady Smith, and the noble Lords, Lord Coaker and Lord Collins, that, as we move forward through this crisis, I will continue to engage practically and readily with all noble Lords, but in particular the Front Benches. I know I speak for my noble friend Lady Goldie as well. The noble Baroness, Lady Smith, asked whether we are working together. I hope the fact that the two of us appear together on this Bench today indicates how the Ministry of Defence and the FCDO, as well as the Home Office, are working very much as one Government.

I am grateful to noble Lords for their contributions. I noted what the noble Lord, Lord Carlile, said: that people are perhaps noted by who is here and who is absent. But, as the noble Lord, Lord Coaker, reminded us, we have had contributions from former Defence Secretaries, the former Secretary-General of NATO, former Permanent Under-Secretaries and former diplomats.

I am particularly reminded of my own time on the Front Bench, and I can count at least two Members of your Lordships’ House who I have had the honour to serve with as a Minister and who have given me invaluable advice as Permanent Secretaries at the Home Office—I refer to the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, and of course to the noble Lord, Lord McDonald. The advice they offered was so invaluable to Ministers.

On that note, I congratulate the noble Lord, Lord Sedwill, as others have done, on a customary contribution; by that I mean that he got to the point, which was reflective of the debate. To make a personal reflection, I remember that when I was a Home Office Minister, as Minister for Countering Extremism, I faced a particular challenge. Many noble Lords will recall the awful and appalling “Kill a Muslim Day”. On that particular occasion—it was Eid—I received a call from the noble Lord. In a very calm way he said, “Tariq, I need you to come in; we need to have a chat.” I was one of the recipients of what was, thankfully, only white chalk. The noble Lord talked me through what the next steps were, very calmly and with great expertise, and I am grateful to him. I share that with noble Lords because it reflects the real strength that we bring in our collaborative approach.

Today is a testament to that, in the collaborative and collective response that we are giving unequivocally to President Putin. His actions are appalling: he has invaded a sovereign state and the best thing he can do right now is to withdraw.

As I came here I was checking my phone; the numbers are now, regrettably and tragically, rising, and there is a cost on all sides. As my noble friend Lord Tugendhat, among others, reminded us, our fight is not with the Russian people. There is a cost of lives. Perhaps even many of the Russian soldiers who are going to war and who are now in Ukraine are being forced to do so; they have families and lives. But the cost and toll of this is not just to Ukraine or Russia but to us all. Many noble Lords reminded us of that poignant fact.

It is clear that this House today stands united with the Government in their position of condemnation of the actions of the Russian Government. Their invasion of Ukraine was an unprovoked and premeditated attack against a sovereign democratic state, and a flagrant violation of international law and the UN charter.

The noble Lord, Lord Robertson, who brings great insight and experience, highlighted the importance of upholding international law, but also of recognising the commitments that Mr Putin himself has signed. This is not just about international law, if he does not want to have regard for that; he signed these agreements himself.

The noble Lord, Lord Newby, in his opening remarks talked about alliances and a strategic review. I assure him, as someone who very much lived through the challenges of Afghanistan—I am grateful to noble Lords for their support—that again, our response is being informed by the lessons learned from that particular crisis about how we can respond better.

Various statements were made about work and co-operation, whether at the European Union—I refer to the noble Baroness, Lady Northover—or at the United Nations. I say to the noble Baroness, Lady Bennett of Manor Castle, who I cannot see—

Baroness Bennett of Manor Castle (GP): I am here.

Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon (Con): This is what happens during debates. I assure the noble Baroness that I was at the United Nations during the General

Assembly debates. It is not just about shoring up support with our friends and allies but about doing so across the globe. We mentioned previously the contributions of the permanent representative of Kenya. Over the last few days and weeks, we have been working and shoring up support for any resolution. It is true that the UN Security Council resolution will no doubt be vetoed by Russia.

Important contributions were made by the noble Lord, Lord Kerr, and others about talking to other near neighbours. Indeed, right after the debate I intend to have a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan on various issues, including the very issue of support from the near neighbours of Russia.

Of course, it is important to consider our response, and I hope during the time I have to pick up on a number of the questions raised by noble Lords. Let me assure the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, from the outset that we are using Britain's position on the world stage to condemn the onslaught against Ukraine, and we will counter the Kremlin's blizzard of lies and disinformation by telling the truth about Putin's war of aggression. We are working together with a number of key allies to ensure that we never give up on peace, as the most reverend Primate reminded us we should never do. He quoted the words, "Blessed are the peacekeepers", and we keep that very much at the forefront of our minds. The door of diplomacy should always remain open. However, when the opposite side rejects, as Mr Putin has done, the very existence of the nation of Ukraine, the challenge becomes all the more difficult.

Many noble Lords alluded to what is happening in Russia, and it is right that we recognise the strong rejection of Russian actions. Yet we have seen, through Mr Putin's action on Mr Navalny, for example, what he thinks of democracy in his own country.

My noble friend Lord King talked about the quality of today's debate: he is quite right, and he is a good example of it. The House is a great source of wisdom. As the Minister responsible—and I know I speak for my noble friend as well—I can say that the contributions today, as the noble Lord, Lord Coaker, reminded us, inform our policy. I know that noble Lords regularly challenge us because there are things we are not doing or not doing fast enough, but I assure them that we reflect very carefully on the valued contributions that this House makes thanks to its wisdom, insight and expertise.

The past few hours have seen Russian forces approaching Kyiv, and we need to make sure that we focus on that and continue to work with allies to provide support, particularly to the brave President Zelensky. On the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Alton, we are in touch with the Ukrainians. I am in regular touch with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, as is my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary, and my right honourable friend the Prime Minister has spoken regularly to President Zelensky, who has made a clear and courageous decision to remain in his country. The noble Lord, Lord Adonis, mentioned the president's address, in Russian, to the Russian people. It was a very poignant message, delivered in Russian, that his fight is not with the Russian people, and he therefore implored them to reject Mr Putin's actions.

The Government and our allies have warned for weeks, as the noble Lord, Lord Ricketts, acknowledged, that President Putin was preparing for the actions we have seen. As my noble friend Lord Howell reminded us, this is not limited to Europe, but goes way beyond. I assure my noble friend and my noble friend Lord King that colleagues, led by the Foreign Secretary, are speaking to Foreign Ministers around the clock to shore up support for the General Assembly vote at the UN.

We were constantly told by the Russian Government that there were no plans to invade Ukraine, but it is obvious to all of us, now that various events have come to pass, that, as the Russian Government have demonstrated, they were never serious about diplomacy. My noble friend Lady Meyer reminded us of their rejection of the Minsk accord. The noble Lord, Lord Alton, rightly spoke passionately, as he always does, about human rights. I intend to be at the Human Rights Council on Monday, events allowing, and will certainly be pursuing whatever further action can be taken at the HRC. The noble and right reverend Lord, Lord Harries, reminded us of the importance of rights within country, and that will be central to our thinking and support of Ukraine's position.

Turning to the issue of sanctions, the noble Baroness, Lady Kramer, and my noble friends Lady Neville-Jones and Lord Tugendhat talked about the public register and the economic crime Bill. My right honourable friend the Prime Minister announced yesterday that we will bring forward measures on unexplained wealth orders. I have heard again the strength of feeling on expediting the economic crime Bill, a point made well by the noble Baroness, Lady Northover. We will be laying further legislation, starting next week, to broaden the scope to allow us to act quicker and more broadly on the issue of sanctions as a whole.

The noble Baroness, Lady Kramer, also asked about what is happening currently in Hong Kong and Singapore. I know my right honourable friend the Trade Secretary is currently visiting that region. The points she made about how quickly centres can move is not lost on me, as I spent 20 years in the City of London, but I assure her that we are ensuring that we work with key partners. Hong Kong poses its own challenge, for obvious reasons, but we can work with Singapore as a partner and an ally.

Noble Lords made a point about ensuring that we talk to China. Only this morning my right honourable friend the Foreign Secretary spoke to State Councillor Wang Yi about the position of China, including at the UN Security Council, and we again impressed on China the importance of unity and purpose, not just on the Security Council but further afield. As the noble Lord, Lord Kerr, reminded us, the Chinese are no fans of annexation in terms of republics declaring self-determination. Nevertheless, we will continue to work to the wire at the UNSC.

The noble Lords, Lord McDonald, Lord Adonis and Lord Alderdice, my noble friends Lord Robathan and Lord Tugendhat, the noble Baronesses, Lady Kramer and Lady Wheatcroft, and others rightly raised the issue of sanctions. We intend to freeze the assets of Russian banks, totally shutting out Russian banks from today.

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]

A number of noble Lords raised the cost. It is, of course, real. The noble Lord, Lord Owen, talked poignantly in this remarks about the cost. The cost is not just to the Ukrainian people or to those who neighbour Ukraine; it will be felt by all of us. As someone who has some insight into banking, the freezing of the assets of organisations such as VTB will have an impact on many businesses that operate within the UK, but severe restrictions will hammer Russia's leading defence companies and significantly degrade Russia's economic and military development. The sanctions will also have an immediate impact on Russia's wealthy elite and Putin's inner circle. We have targeted specifically his former son-in-law. The noble Lord, Lord Alderdice, talked about ensuring that we meet our obligations in this regard and about the long-term impacts being understood. We are going to introduce further legislation allowing us to ban Russian state and private companies from raising funds in the UK.

On SWIFT, which the noble Lords, Lord Adonis, Lord Alderdice and Lord Coaker, and many other noble Lords mentioned specifically, we believe that Russia should be cut out of SWIFT. That is not a shared view, but we continue to work with our European allies and friends to ensure that we can move forward as quickly as possible on that.

We will impose asset freezes on more than 100 entities and individuals and we will limit the amount of money that Russian nationals hold in their UK bank accounts. We will ban the Russian carrier Aeroflot. There is the tat-for-tat that also takes place. I assure the noble Lords, Lord Kerr and Lord Hannay, that we are scaling up trade measures on high-tech goods, which will erode Russia's strategic development with immediate effect. All existing export licences for dual-use items going to Russia will be suspended and no new licences will be granted. I will write to the noble Baroness, Lady Kramer, on numbers in the kleptocrat unit within the NCA—but, yes, it is important that it is properly resourced and funded. That point was made by my noble friend Lady Neville-Jones.

The UK sanctions that currently exist against 120 businesses and oligarchs are part of a concerted strike against Mr Putin's regime and are carefully co-ordinated with our international allies, including the US, the EU and other G7 partners. I say to the noble Baroness, Lady Bennett, that when we look across the G7—I am a big advocate of it—there is an increasing number of women Foreign Ministers, including in the Five Eyes, where I believe the only male member is the United States Secretary of State. There is a real move to ensure that women are rightly in key leadership positions.

The UK will also take decisive action against Belarus for its part in the wholly unjustified attack on Ukraine.

I note very carefully the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Carlile, on legal registers et cetera, and I would of course be keen to hear more details and thoughts on how that can perhaps be incorporated into future consideration.

VTB, Russia's second-largest bank, is worth £154 billion, so there are impacts to be felt.

The noble Lord, Lord Newby, and the noble Baronesses, Lady Bennett and Lady Kramer, raised specific names. As I have already said, we have taken action against elites. I cannot go into future designations, but noble Lords will be kept up to speed by the fact that the broader legislation will allow us to capture more people. The noble Baroness, Lady Kramer, also asked about the applicability of sanctions to the overseas territories and the Crown dependencies. The sanctions instrument which we plan to lay will apply to the OTs and CDs.

Gazprom was raised by several noble Lords, including the noble Lord, Lord Adonis, and the noble Baroness, Lady Kramer. We are co-ordinating with our allies to maximise the economic cost. This must include addressing the issue of European dependence on gas companies such as Gazprom. VTB and VEB are prevented, under existing sanctions, from raising further finance in the City of London and the UK. As I have said, further legislation will be made next week. In the time that I have, I hope that this gives a sense of the sanctions issue, our intent and our direction of travel. We are working tirelessly with our allies and partners to co-ordinate our response in this respect.

I assure the noble Lord, Lord Anderson, that the Council of Europe is very much on our agenda. I welcome further thoughts—following what the noble Lord talked about—on the exclusion of Russia from European bodies. That is very much for the bodies themselves to decide, but there is a point to be made on ensuring that Russia knows that there is a sanction for its actions.

We are also currently looking at energy, which was referred to by my noble friend Lord Howell, among others. We welcome the statements made recently by the German Chancellor on Nord Stream 2. At the G7 meeting yesterday, the UK agreed to work in unity to maximise the economic price that Mr Putin will pay for his aggression. I agree with noble Lords that this must include ending Europeans' collective dependence on Russian oil and gas. Ours is circa 3%. We are moving to other sustainable sources. Nevertheless, it is important that we work together with our European colleagues and friends.

Rightly so, humanitarian support is high up on our agenda. On this, I assure noble Lords, as someone who is now responsible for humanitarian thematic work within the FCDO. The UK has already committed funding and technical expertise to agencies working on responses to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. Earlier this week, I met the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, to outline our support. We are finalising the financial package and working hand in glove with OCHA to ensure that we provide the support to the Ukraine Humanitarian Fund that is needed. These concerns were raised by the noble Lord, Lord Collins, as well as my noble friend Lord Davies. I assure the noble Baroness, Lady Goudie, that, in all our support, and particularly on humanitarian matters, the issue of girls and women will be central to our thinking and support.

I turn to visas and help for refugees, raised by the noble Lords, Lord Newby and Lord Hannay, the noble Baroness, Lady Northover, and others.

The noble Baroness, Lady Ludford, also flagged this as a specific issue. Today, the Home Secretary has confirmed that Ukrainians here in the UK on work or study visas will have their visas extended and will be able to switch to different visa routes. All visa routes are also based on what noble Lords have said. I share the sentiments that were expressed, including by my noble friend Lady Neville-Jones. It is my strong personal view that if people are fleeing persecution and need assistance, the United Kingdom has been and will—I hope, always—remain a country that is open. We need to work to ensure that we stand firm in this commitment, as we have done previously. I am sure that the Home Secretary will have listened to the comments made today, and we will continue to work in this respect to ensure that we provide the support that the Ukrainians need.

I will indulge the House slightly further on important issues of defence and NATO. Defence is playing a central role in the UK's response to the Russian invasion, and we will ensure that the UK and our security interests are secured. Secondly, we will work through NATO and closely with our allies and partners—including Ukraine, of course—in the hours and days ahead. Working together is a real strength. I hope the noble Viscount, Lord Stansgate, is reassured that we are ensuring that we provide security to all parts of NATO. This was a key point raised by the noble Lord, Lord West. The noble and gallant Lord, Lord Stirrup, and the noble Lord, Lord Dannatt, reminded us of the importance of our security and defence partnerships.

The question of whether we are sending further troops to Ukraine was asked. We have stood up support, such as helping with humanitarian support. I was in Estonia a couple of weeks ago when we announced the increase in the support we provide to Estonia through NATO and doubled our number of troops; that has been stood up. We are offering further military support, in terms of defensive capabilities, to Ukraine directly. We have already begun our military support to NATO allies and partners. An initial deployment of Royal Marines has arrived in Poland. On a bilateral basis, we are strengthening our solidarity with our NATO allies. In addition, the further Typhoon aircraft that my noble friend Lady Goldie mentioned will allow us to establish a full squadron at RAF Akrotiri. Over the coming months we will also maintain our activities to provide further reassurance.

We also remain supportive of Ukraine's NATO membership application, in line with the 2008 Bucharest summit. I assure the noble Lords, Lord Sedwill and Lord Campbell-Savours, that we remain firm on what NATO is. It is a bedrock of European security, but it is a defensive alliance; that point needs to be understood.

I assure my noble friend Lady Rawlings that we are offering broader support to others. My noble friend Lady McIntosh mentioned discussions under Articles 4 and 5. Those are very much under way to ensure that all members of NATO receive the support and the reassurances they currently require as Russia continues to exercise its expansionist policies.

On wider defence issues, I welcome the point made by the noble Lord, Lord Owen, about how we have increased spending. I listened carefully, as did my

noble friend Lady Goldie, on the importance of ensuring that we are equipped in our defence responses to meet the requirements of the day. Meeting the challenges of cyber is not lost on us.

The UK leads as a European contributor to NATO's defence capability, and it is important that other NATO partners step up in their response as well. We have readiness forces and make contributions to NATO formations. Our Armed Forces have been built up to face major state threats; that is why they include state-of-the-art capabilities such as F35 fifth-generation fighters, the Queen Elizabeth-class aircraft carrier and other assets. During this crisis, the UK is doubling the number of personnel in Estonia, as I said, and sending four additional UK Typhoon jets to Cyprus. HMS "Trent" is conducting patrols in the eastern Mediterranean and HMS "Diamond" is preparing to sail. Over the last week, 350 Royal Marines of 45 Commando committed to Poland have already been deployed. As I said, we have also put 1,000 more British personnel at a state of readiness to support the humanitarian response.

The noble Lord, Lord Newby, talked of Russian election interference. We have taken steps to secure more mitigations against such interference, but we should be ever ready. The Russian state continues to disrupt Ukraine, Europe, the UK and the world, and we need to ensure our state-of-the-art response. Anyone who has had any engagement with the National Cyber Security Centre will know that we really are world leading in this respect.

My noble friend Lady Meyer asked about Russian and Ukrainian expertise in language training. That is very much at the forefront of how we deploy our diplomats, as I am sure other former Permanent Secretaries of the FCO will testify. The skills training for our diplomats, including our current diplomats serving in Moscow, reflects the language skills they require.

My noble friend Lord Cormack and the noble Baroness, Lady Goudie, raised the BBC World Service. Last year the FCDO announced £94.4 million to help the World Service build on its great work. I assure noble Lords that we are looking to see how, through an additional £3 million of funding, we can directly address additional investment to tackle disinformation.

We have had a very extensive debate. Over the next few hours and days, we will continue working with G7 partners. We are active at the UN Security Council, and working very closely with our NATO allies, in Brussels and bilaterally, but also more broadly in ensuring that our humanitarian, defence, security and cyberdefence response, and our continuing work on sanctions, are fully aligned.

In seeking to divide us, Mr Putin has done quite the opposite. This is, as the noble Lord, Lord Coaker, said, one of those occasions when we have 99.9% unanimity and solidarity across your Lordships' House. A clear message goes out from here: you have not only united us but you have united Europe, and we are working on uniting the world.

What has happened in Ukraine is blatantly against the UN charter. Russia is a P5 member that signs up to it. There is an extra responsibility. I was in that chamber when I heard the Russian representative, an ambassador whom I know, directly attack the Secretary-General of

[LORD AHMAD OF WIMBLEDON]
the United Nations. For what? Secretary-General Guterres was standing up against aggression and condemning it. That should not be happening in the United Nations. He was doing what he should as Secretary-General: bringing countries together. The 190-plus nations of the United Nations must stand together against that one nation which clearly has violated the sovereignty of another. NATO, the European Union and our work through all key alliances and the United Nations are central to our thinking and our actions.

In thanking all noble Lords for their very insightful, expert contributions today, I end with the words of an anthem known well to the Ukrainians, which perhaps

embellishes our support and emboldens the spirit of Ukrainians. From this House and from the other place, from this Parliament and from our country, there is a message of solidarity and unity: we stand with you. In the words of the anthem:

“Glorious spirit of Ukraine shines and lives forever.
Blessed by fortune, brotherhood will stand up together.
Like the dew before the sun, enemies will fade,
We will further rule and prosper in our promised land.”

Motion agreed.

House adjourned at 3.23 pm.

