Twitter Thread by Mafevema #CommonGround



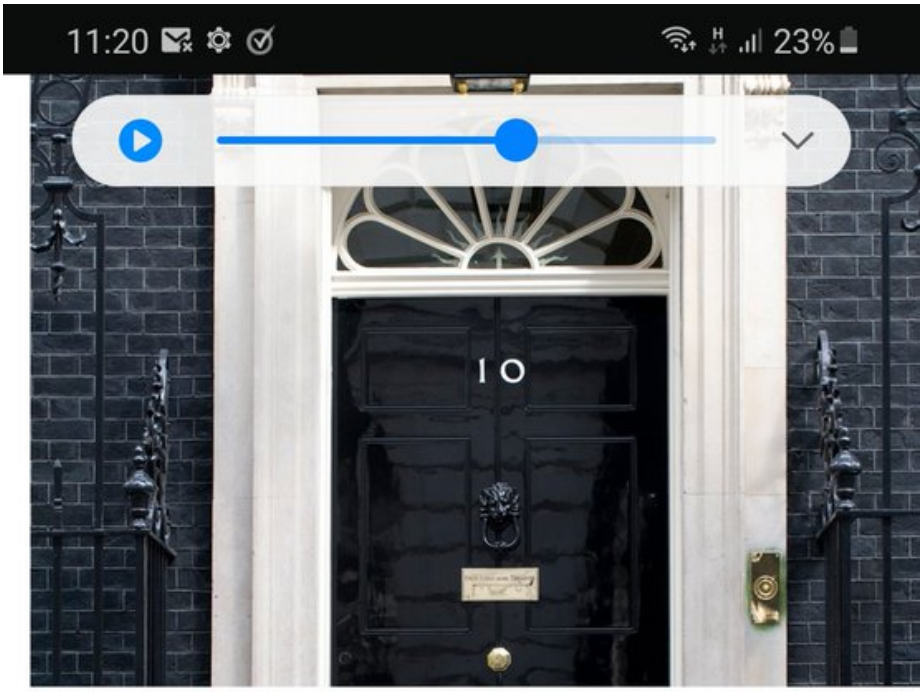
Mafevema #CommonGround
@mafevema



Why is Johnson's speech at the Munich conference hailed in some quarters, even by some journalists that should know better, as "a major policy speech" with "substance"? I went to read it expecting for once to be pleasantly surprised. Alas! Thread

It is full of the usual misplaced optimism not backed by any serious analysis, jingoism & digs at other EU leaders with transparent, nearly servile efforts to regain favour with the new US administration. A few examples:

The speech starts with the trademark rethorical device beloved of the UK right (whether to attack "woke' culture or pro-EU sentiments): A wildly exaggerated overblown simplistic statement that you then go on to "disprove"



There is a habit of turning up at occasions such as these and announcing portentously that the West is locked in terminal decline, the Atlantic alliance is fractured, and NATO is in peril, and everything we hold dear risks being cast into oblivion.

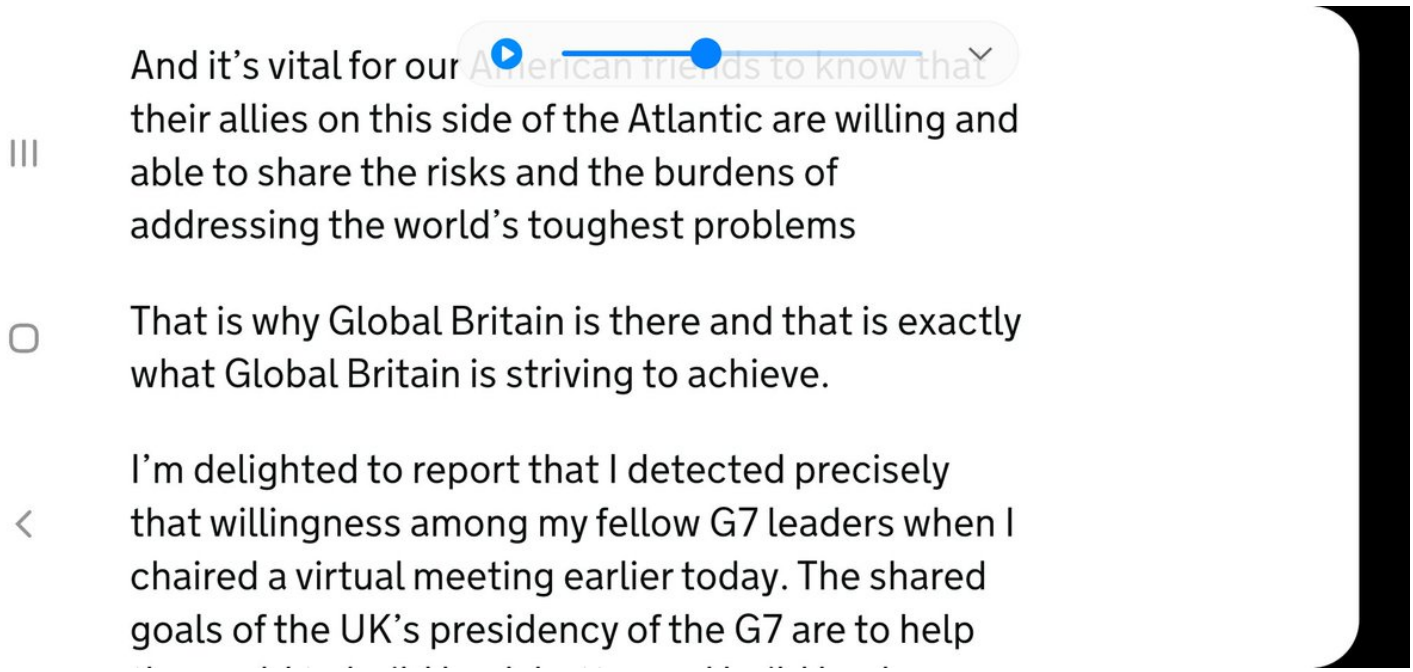
And that industry of pessimism has thrived recently, perhaps even in Munich.

So without wishing for a moment to downplay the challenges and dangers we face, in the tee of a global pandemic, let me respectfully suggest that the gloom has been overdone an we are turning a corner, and the countries we call the "West" are drawing together and combining their formidable strengths and expertise once again, immensely to everybody benefit.

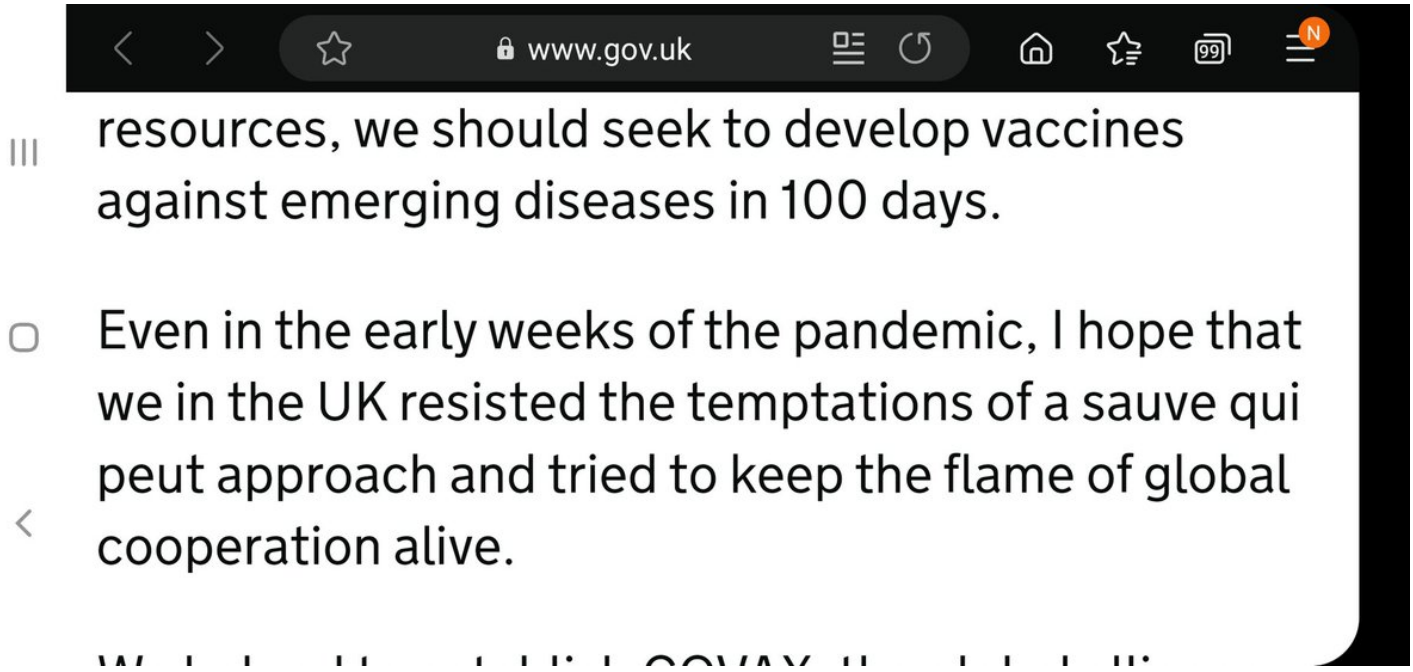
As you've seen and heard earlier, America is

So a dig aimed at Macron for saying NATO needs to adapt to changing circumstances and flattery towards America : "As you've seen and heard earlier, America is unreservedly back as leader of the free world and that is a fantastic thing."

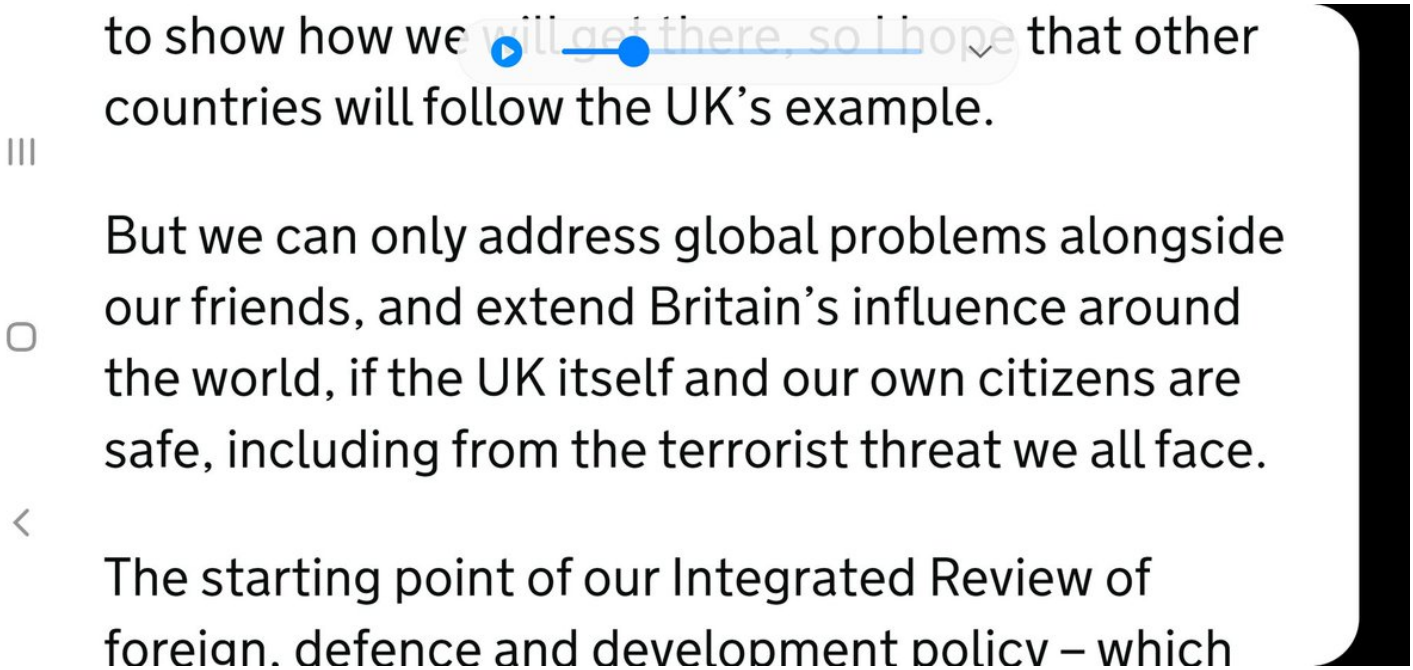
Then the self- agrandissements : notice all the "I" & "Global Britain"



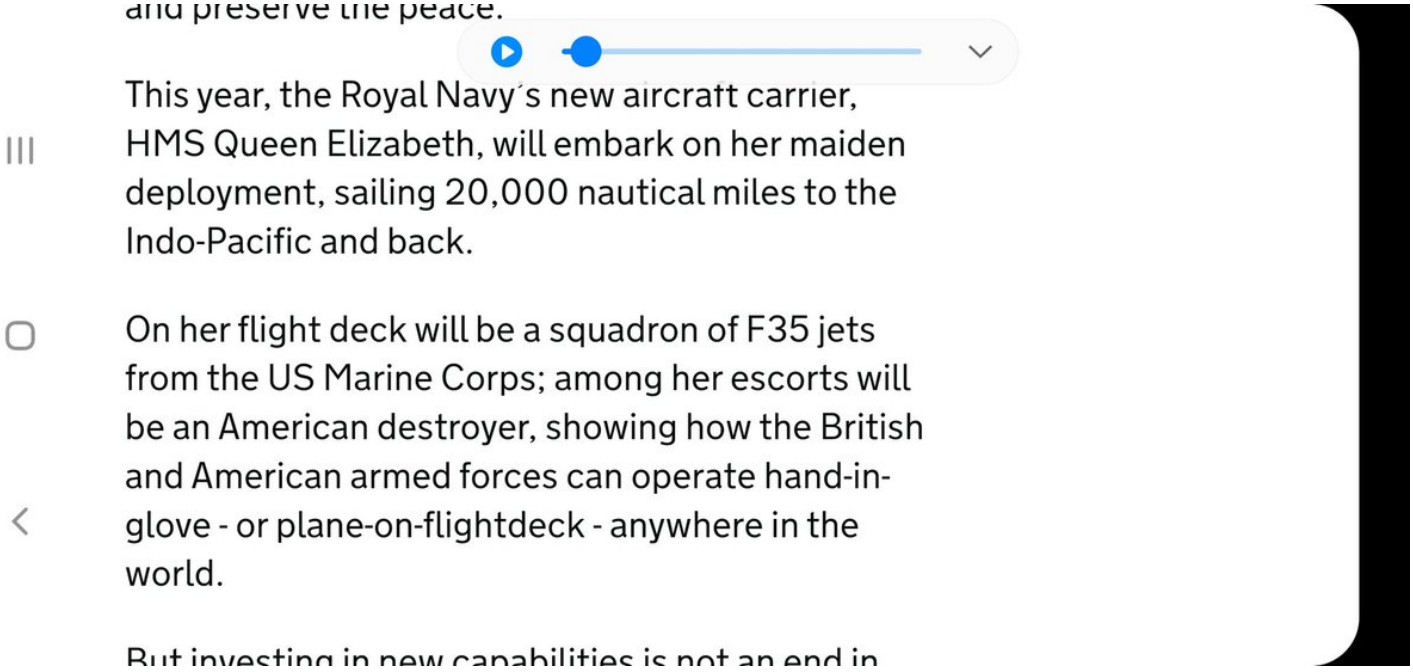
Then (irony klaxon), the PM who by mysterious means ensured exclusivity of supply for vaccines manufactured on its territory to the clear detriment of its nearest "friends" (having received vaccines from EU factories when its supply was short) exalts the "flames of cooperation "



■says the man who pulled his country out of Europe security institutions to the horror of his immediate predecessor making it more exposed to terrorist threat, the same man who casually disregarded (even recently poured oil over) the simmering tensions in Northern Ireland.



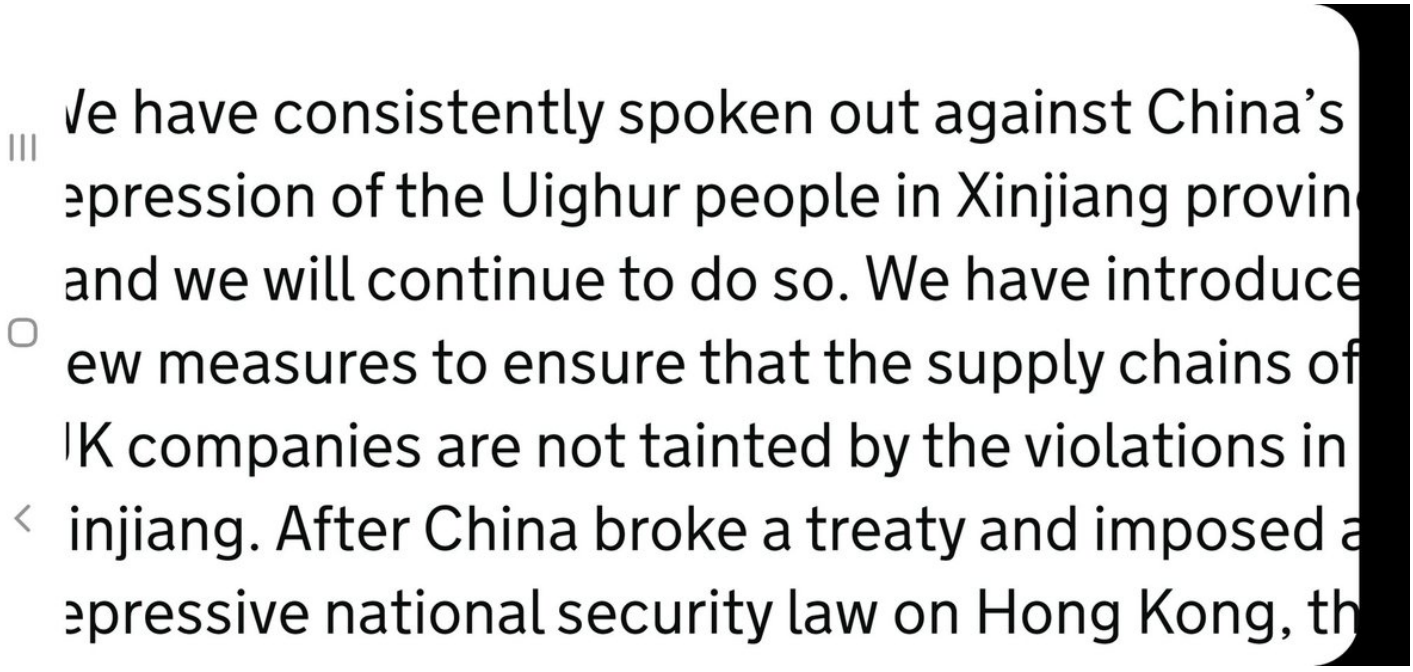
Then ■ pathetic boast: I have got a big one too (hey, Joe, remember all those big defense procurement contracts)



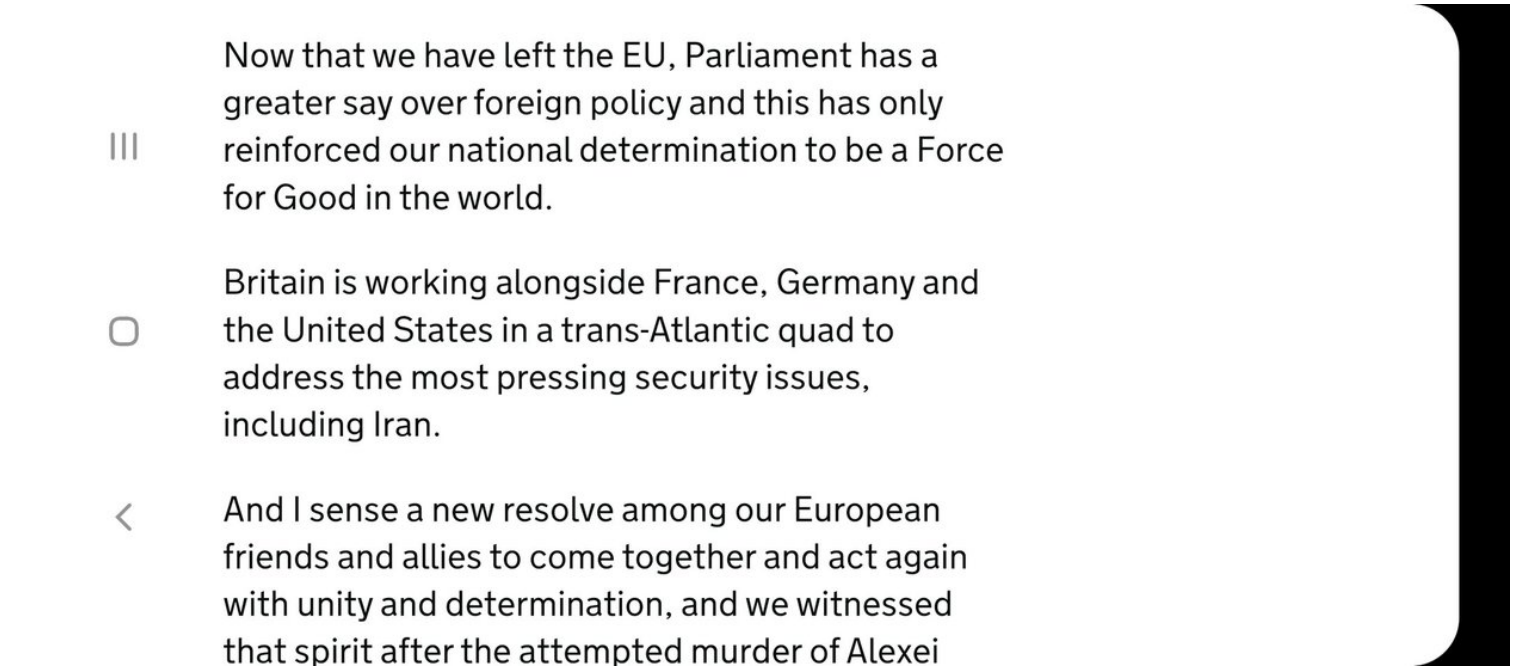
Followed by another Brexit boast & a dig at the (naturally slower more cumbersome) EU. But ask yourself: which sanctions matter more to Putin? EU's or UK's?And which UK party wanted to pull out of the Human Right Convention & threatens to "rewrite" the Human Rights Act?



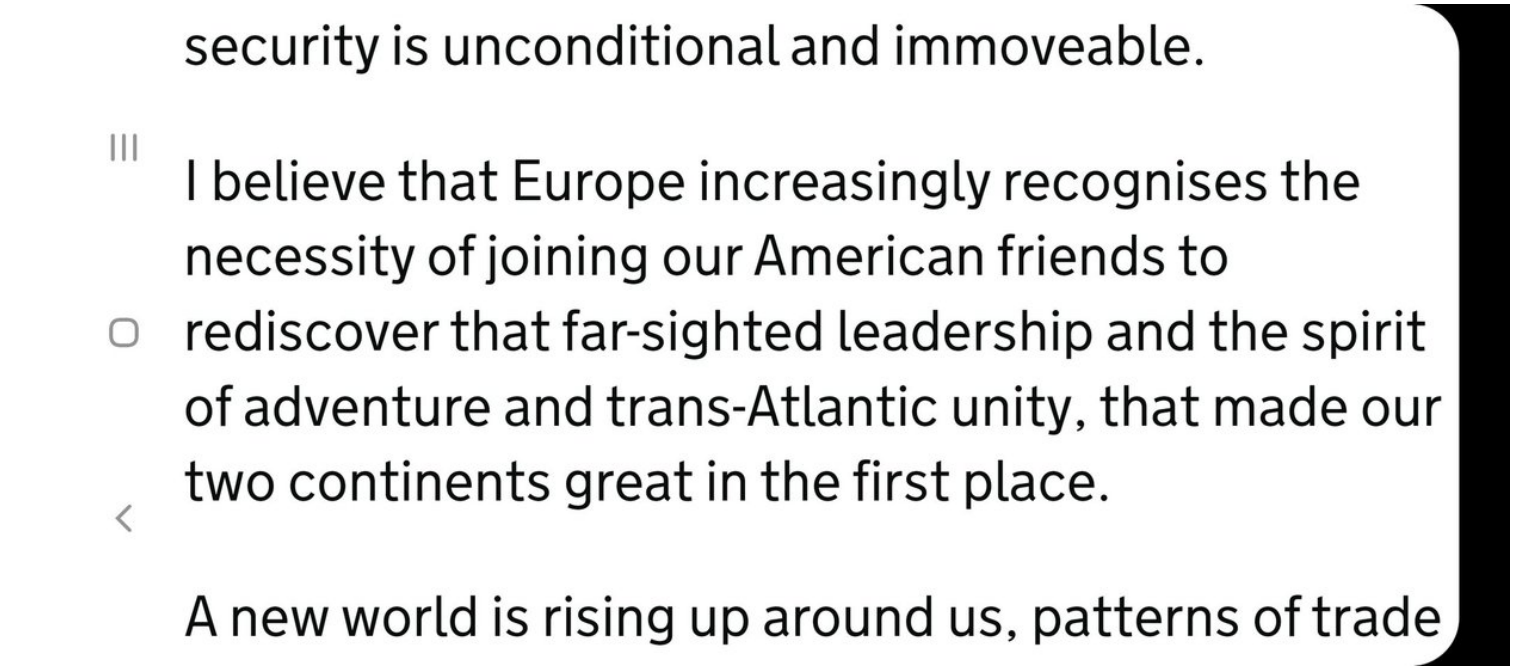
Then new dig at the EU & pat on Biden's back: this time about the EU/China investment Agreement which 1) merely ensures the same competitive advantages to EU cnies as to US ones 2) includes - contrary to US's arrangements- some leverage due to China's committments slave labour



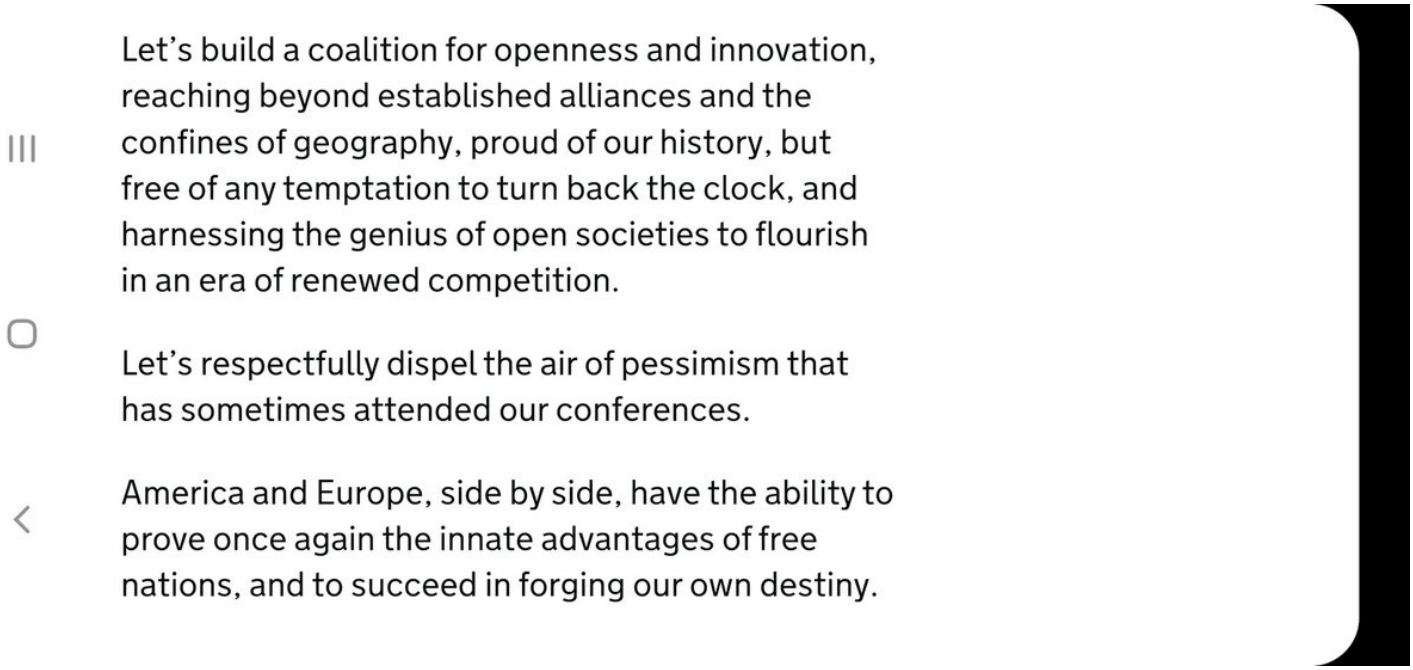
Britain always had "sovereignty" over its defense policy. The "Transatlantic Quad" was operational & has been much weakened by Brexit. As for the "new resolve" of our European "friends", it has nothing to do with what Britain does or does not do.



Fawning to the point of being obsequious & yet another dig at the EU. Completely ignore the question mark on the health of US democracy raised by recent events.



And finally a clichés ridden conclusion, high on hopes, light on facts



Flattery to the US, sly attacks on the EU (particularly France, our major European defense partner which is at striking odds odds with the supposed aim of the speech), trademark boosterism, overblown statements on Britain's role, overuse of the word "Britain"

(is NI to be dumped?) , if this is a "great speech" of "substance", what is a poor Johnson's speech? The major achievement is that the sentences hang together & it was blissfully short.