

Ukraine Memorial Service held in Edinburgh

A memorial service was held in Edinburgh at the Scottish National War Memorial at Edinburgh Castle to mark the third anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Politicians of all parties attended the event, including the First Minister, John Swinney, and the Under Secretary of State for Scotland, Kirsty McNeill. Edinburgh was represented by the Deputy Lord Provost, Lezley Marion Cameron and the Council Leader, Jane Meagher.

After the service The Edinburgh Reporter spoke to the First Minister and others about the event and the need for peace.

Hannah Beaton Hawryluk, the Chairman of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain said this event was of enormous significance for Ukrainians living here. She said: "It shows the people of Ukraine that they've not been forgotten, because sometimes we're not even a footnote on the news anymore, and rightly so. Other wars happen, but people are still dying in Ukraine, and it's every day. Last night, the whole of Ukraine was bombarded with over 200 missiles, and nowhere is safe."

Ms McNeill confirmed that the UK Government continue to offer its support to Ukraine. She said: "It was incredibly moving to be here today showing solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and this Labour government will stand with Ukraine for as long

as it takes.”

The First Minister said that his view of peace is an independent Ukraine. He said: “Peace looks to me like the protection of the sovereignty of the people of Ukraine, giving them the ability to take their own decisions about their own future and the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

“It means that Russia should not be able to invade Ukraine, as they have been able to do, as we mark the third anniversary. That invasion has got to be repelled and the freedom of Ukraine delivered.”

Asked whether the new US President is affecting any moves towards peace the First Minister was circumspect. He said there are “real challenges, difficulties and uncertainties facing Ukraine now, more so than has been the case for most of the period of the invasion.

“We need to reassert the importance of the international community’s solidarity with Ukraine, which we express here in Scotland today, and make sure that the territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored and its independence and its security assured.”

The council leader, Jane Meagher said that she is proud of Edinburgh’s track record in welcoming Ukrainian friends to the city. She said: “So far we’ve had around 1,200 Ukrainians to whom we’ve been able to offer hospitality.”

Prime Minister

Meanwhile in a speech the Prime Minister, Sir Keir Starmer, said: “We must bring our collective strength to the peace effort.

President Trump has changed the global conversation over the last few weeks. And it has created an opportunity. Now, we must get the fundamentals right.

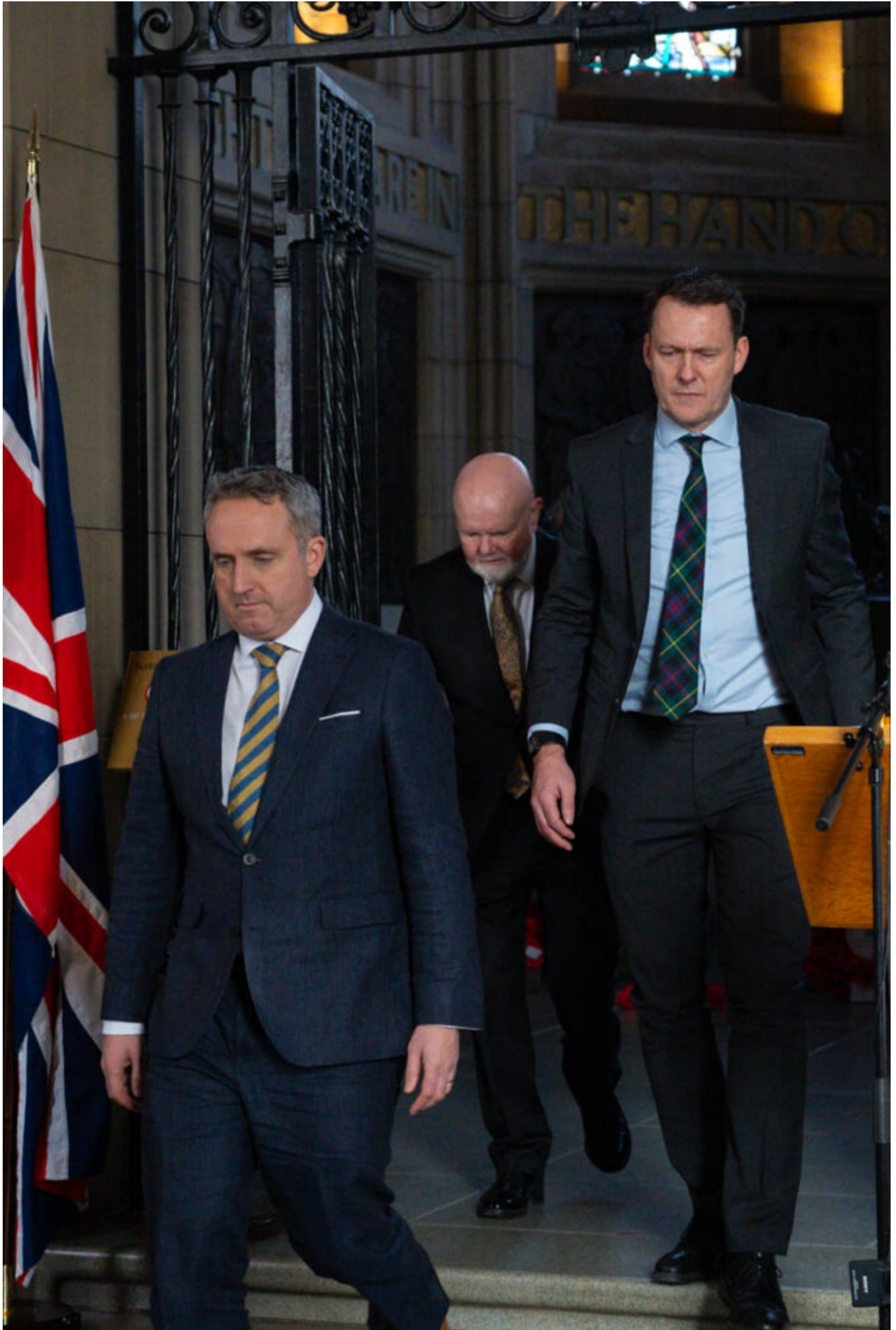
“If we want peace to endure, Ukraine must have a seat at the table... And any settlement must be based on a sovereign Ukraine... Backed up with strong security guarantees. The UK is ready and willing to support this with troops on the ground – With other Europeans, and with the right conditions in place. And ultimately a US backstop will be vital to deter Russia from launching another invasion in just a few years’ time.

“So we will do everything we can to get the best outcome for Ukraine – and for us all. Let me close with one of those voices I mentioned earlier – A patient called Petro, from the burns unit I visited in Kyiv. He said to me... “If Ukraine fails, Europe will be next.” That is what’s at stake here. That is why we will always stand with Ukraine, and with our allies... Against this aggression... And for a just and lasting peace. Slava Ukraini.”



First Minister John Swinney at memorial service at the Scottish National War Memorial





Alex Cole-Hamilton, Scottish Liberal Democrat Leader, Colin Beattie MSP and Russell Findlay Leader of the Scottish Conservatives



Father Vasyl Kren of Our Lady of Pochaiv and St Andrews, a Ukrainian Catholic Church on Dalmeny Street



A group of Ukrainians who attended the service



The Presiding Officer of the Scottish Parliament, The Rt Hon

Alison Johnstone MSP after laying a wreath

