



Predsednica Republike Slovenije

NATAŠA PIRC MUSAR

**Speech by the President of the Republic, Nataša Pirc Musar,
on the Occasion of the Celebration of Slovenian-British Friendship**

May 28, 2025, Gornji Suhor

Dear Mayor,
Esteemed British guests,
Honoured residents,
Ladies and gentlemen,

This month, we celebrated the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, when Slovenians resisted occupation, the violence of fascism and Nazism, and attempts to erase the Slovenian nation. With great courage, enthusiasm, determination, and armed struggle, we won our freedom, an equal voice in the international community, and, years later, our own country.

But we were not alone in this historic resistance. The dark shadow of war horrors that then covered the world triggered a powerful response. From resistance and hope emerged the values of a common struggle. Freedom-loving nations united in the desire for peace, rights, dignity, and a free future. In cooperation with partners and allies, we defeated the fascist and Nazi military machine. Many suffered and sacrificed, families, communities, and nations were affected. They bled so that we could live better lives today. Because of these sacrifices, wounds, and pains, we must remember those people and events with deep respect, gratitude, and humility. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that memory and warning never fade.

Recently, I met with surviving participants of the national liberation struggle, fighters now around the venerable age of 100. I will never forget their sincere words, sparkling eyes, and heartfelt spirit. They endured much in their lives. But they all share one guiding principle and call to us all – a call that war must never happen again. It is sad that, despite people who have already experienced such tragedy, we still fail to grasp the senselessness of war violence. It is alarming that in the 21st century, humanity still does not understand this.

It is irrational, inhumane, and uncivilized to seek space for dialogue only after destruction and the sacrifice of thousands of lives and the future of generations. Unfortunately, we witness such actions daily in many hotspots around the world, including Gaza and Ukraine. Political interests blind us, and responsibility, moral judgment, and respect for fundamental values are not prioritized. The trampling of human dignity and civilian populations in war is unacceptable – it leads humanity to ruin.

I ask myself, where has our moral compass gone – the compass of each individual, of those who make decisions and those who pull the trigger? Can we not look within ourselves, into the depths of our souls and hearts? Can we not ask what is right and what is wrong? The consequences of such actions will not disappear. They will remain and burden future generations. We will need much sincere remorse, forgiveness, reason, respect, and statesmanship to bring the world, which has gone off course, back on track.

Dear all,

Today's event holds special significance. It reminds us of what we must carefully nurture – friendship, respect, and cooperation among nations, helping fellow humans, and the desire for peace and freedom. We must first gratefully remember the locals who, after the crash of the British bomber nearby, cared for the injured and helped the surviving crew members. During World War II, our ancestors across Slovenia showed great heart and helped more than 800 downed Allied airmen. Despite the horrors of war, humanity, humanitarianism, and solidarity prevailed. At the same time, we must not forget the extensive help from the Allies, including the fighters of the United Kingdom, for which we will be forever grateful. Our joint efforts in those dark times led to victory over evil and gave us a chance for new beginnings.

Just as 80 years ago, the role of the United Kingdom today, in increasingly unpredictable international circumstances, remains crucial for the stability and security of the European continent. Development-oriented partnership and allied cooperation must be based on the principles of international law, mutual agreement, and respect for human rights and freedoms. On this basis, we look forward to strengthened partnership cooperation between the European Union and the United Kingdom in the field of security and defense, which was concluded a few days ago. Only political and diplomatic consultations and defense efforts will contribute to joint initiatives, finding solutions for peace in Ukraine and elsewhere, and deterring potential security challenges.

On this occasion, I would also like to highlight new opportunities for bilateral cooperation between our countries. These are based on our greatest wealth: knowledge. Therefore, we must direct our joint efforts toward modern technologies and innovations, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, renewable energy sources, tourism, and more. For the sake of our shared future, I sincerely hope we will also find solutions for the renewed exchange of students, as this brings valuable added value for all. Mutual ties – not only institutional but also personal, between people – are an invaluable legacy for current and future generations. And if these ties are based on youth and knowledge, then we can live in hope that relations and awareness of the importance of peace, connection, and harmony among nations will also grow stronger.

In conclusion, I would like to repeat a message I have said before, as it is now more important than ever:

Peace and happiness for Slovenians,
Peace and happiness for the British,
And peace and happiness for all the peoples of the world!

Thank you very much.