

Speech: Foreign Secretary's keynote speech at chemical weapons conference

I'm grateful to the French Chair of the Partnership for convening this important meeting.

We gather at a moment when the rules that guarantee the security of every country – including the global ban on chemical weapons – are gravely imperilled.

Almost a century ago, the world united to prohibit the use of chemical weapons with the Geneva Protocol of 1925.

More recently, 165 countries have signed the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1997 and agreed never to develop, manufacture or stockpile these munitions.

Banning this terrible category of weapon must rank among the seminal diplomatic achievements of the last century.

And yet I have the unwanted distinction of representing a country which has experienced the use of chemical weapons on its soil, not in a 20th century conflict but on 4th March this year,

when a nerve agent struck down a father and daughter in Salisbury.

Sergei and Yulia Skripal were rushed to hospital after being found reeling and distressed on a park bench.

In the days that followed, our experts had to seal off nine locations in Salisbury – including a restaurant and a cemetery – in order to screen them for possible contamination.

A police officer, Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey, was hospitalised after suffering the effects of exposure to the nerve agent.

Scores of unwitting bystanders had to be checked for symptoms.

Their only involvement was that chance had placed them in certain areas of Salisbury on 4th March;

they could have been from any country – including those represented here – for Salisbury ranks among the most popular tourist destinations in Europe.

The fact that no bystander was seriously harmed owed everything to luck and nothing to the perpetrators, who clearly did not care how many innocent people they endangered.

I am glad to say that Mr Skripal was released from hospital earlier today – though he is still receiving treatment. His daughter and Detective Sergeant Bailey were discharged last month.

Our experts analysed samples taken from the scene and identified them as a fourth generation, military-grade “Novichok” nerve agent.

The highest concentration was found on the handle of the front door of Mr Skripal’s home.

We sent samples to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, whose experts independently confirmed this identification.

“Novichok” nerve agents were first developed in the Soviet Union in the 1980s.

The British Government has information that within the last decade, Russia has produced and stockpiled small quantities of “Novichok” under the same programme that also investigated how to deliver nerve agents, including by application to door handles.

The fact that such a pure nerve agent was used narrows down the list of culprits to a state actor.

And there is only one state that combines possession of Novichoks with a record of conducting assassinations and an obvious – indeed publicly avowed – motive for targeting Sergei Skripal.

We are left with no alternative conclusion except that the Russian state was responsible for attempted murder in a British city, using a banned nerve agent in breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Our friends around the world shared our assessment and 28 countries and NATO acted in solidarity with Britain by expelling over 130 Russian diplomats – the biggest coordinated expulsion in history.

Many of those countries are represented here today; once again, I thank them from the bottom of my heart.

This resolute action demonstrated our shared determination to ensure there can be no impunity for the use of chemical weapons,

whether by a state or a terrorist group,

whether in the UK or Syria or anywhere else.

On 7th April, barely a month after the Salisbury incident, the Asad regime used poison gas in the Syrian town of Douma, killing as many as 75 people, including children.

Britain, France and the United States responded by launching targeted, precise and proportionate strikes against the chemical weapons infrastructure of the Syrian regime.

Even before the atrocity in Douma, a joint investigation by the UN and the OPCW had found the Asad regime guilty of using chemical weapons on four separate occasions between 2015 and 2017.

Russia's response was not to enforce the ban on chemical weapons but to use its veto in the Security Council to protect Asad by shutting down the international investigation.

That is all the more tragic when you consider that Russia is a permanent member of the Security Council with special responsibility for upholding peace and security, including the global ban on chemical weapons.

Given that the Kremlin seems determined to block any international investigation empowered to attribute responsibility for chemical attacks in Syria, then we must work together to develop another mechanism.

In the meantime, we have it within our power to impose sanctions on any individuals or entities involved in the use of chemical weapons.

We can collect and preserve the evidence of these crimes.

We can call for a special session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, in order to consider how best to support the Convention and its implementing body, the OPCW.

And we can make clear our resolve that the global ban on chemical weapons shall not be allowed to fade into irrelevance.

If that moral calamity were to happen, the security of every nation would be at risk.

My goal is to be the last foreign minister who attends a gathering like this as the representative of a country that has witnessed the use of chemical weapons.

Thank you.

News story: Underpinning data science – request for information

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) seeks to use cutting-edge data science techniques to develop novel approaches to sort, manage, store, fuse and exploit the vast range of data available now and in the future.

Such capabilities will help improve understanding and situational awareness from all available and pertinent information, improving decision makers' understanding, and thus improving their ability to make better decisions. We (Dstl) wish to gauge the current state of the art and capability across industry and academia to inform our project planning.

We are interested in capabilities that can be applied across defence and

security. We also want to understand potential crossovers from other areas that have similar technical challenges (e.g. the legal, health and finance sectors).

Therefore, we are seeking information on the experience, capabilities, products, facilities and resources that industry and academia have in the following areas:

- The management of uncertainty: Support decision makers by exploiting multiple data feeds with methods for tracking and visualising uncertainty.
- Information science (including information theory): The ability to understand the nature of information; its inherent value; the extent to which questions can be tackled with the data available; and appropriate data reduction techniques to reduce the burden on users.
- Fusion and understanding of information: The fusion of multiple sources of data and information, in order to represent the same real-world objects in a consistent, accurate and useful manner, and to reduce uncertainty. This includes (but is not limited to): aspects of association and correlation; information normalisation; entity disambiguation; summarisation; and supporting the identification and inference of new knowledge.
- Predictive analysis: From rudimentary forms of prediction, such as temporal pattern mining, to predictive analytics, which includes identifying and selecting optimum courses of action for a given future scenario. Interest extends from operational and intelligence functions (e.g. inference of intent and campaign planning outcomes) to wider business needs (e.g. complex scenarios and/or predicting maintenance schedules in support of logistics).
- Hypothesis generation and evaluation: Approaches for generating, describing and evaluating hypotheses in support of decision making – in particular, methods that could improve the currently manual and human-led approach and improve corporate memory.
- People data analytics: Predictive workforce planning, specifically focussing on analysing personnel records and methods, and the wider ethical risks and issues in exploiting data analytics for workforce planning and management (note, that this is not the only applied example we have interest in and information on other applications is welcome).

Your response should detail the nature of the technologies where you have expertise, as well as the current technology readiness level (TRL) and the

maturity these might be expected to reach within a two-year timeframe with realistic funding levels.

This is a request for information to support research activity only, and it is not the start of any formal procurement process. Dstl is looking to assess and understand the scope of the markets capability to formulate its plan for the multi-year research project. Submissions should not contain proprietary or commercially sensitive information.

We may choose to follow up submissions with a 'without commitment' discussion to further understand and explore the information submitted.

Please respond to this request for information no later than six weeks from its release date by emailing: DSTLUDSRFI@dstl.gov.uk.

If you would like to receive further information in the future, please let us know; any project-level communications will augment the standard open advertising of research opportunities.

Press release: Australian life sciences company Medical Ethics announce a £3 million investment in Wales

Melbourne-based life science research and development company Medical Ethics has announced a direct investment of over £3 million in Wales over the next three years, making Cardiff its new base in the northern hemisphere.

Medical Ethics develop products that alleviate pain and minimise suffering associated with wounds and surgical procedures in animals. As a UK hub for life sciences expertise, Wales will provide the company with the ideal base to progress the development of its technology for humans.

Medical Ethics chose to invest in the UK for its expertise in a number of fields required for the commercialisation of the company's technology. This includes regulatory affairs, manufacturing and clinical studies, tax subsidies and patent box incentives.

Currently Medical Ethics engages 18 independent service providers and consultants across the UK and has plans to expand its headcount. The company will also look to use other UK consultants and service providers as it addresses future regulatory and commercialisation requirements.

Medical Ethics has worked with the Department for International Trade (DIT)

for two years, receiving advice, grant application assistance and introductions to key UK stakeholders including the Wales Wound Institute in Cardiff and Cardiff University, both of which the company now collaborates with. Without DIT's support, the company would not have been able to identify these connections and would not have chosen the UK as a location for investment.

Allan Giffard, Managing Director, Medical Ethics said:

For us, Wales was the obvious choice in the UK, especially given our sector – Life Sciences. Wales offers the skills, expertise and infrastructure for our business to thrive.

Through DIT, we've been able to participate in the Global Entrepreneur Programme, enabling us to overcome a number of initial challenges. DIT, along with Innovate UK, also supported us with introductions to key experts including the Wales Wound Institute in Cardiff – an introduction which had a significant impact on our decision to choose the UK.

When looking to expand internationally, we initially looked at a number of countries. However, we believe it would have been a more difficult process in these territories as we did not identify programmes that provide the same level of support we've been offered in the UK.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This announcement is testament to the strong appetite worldwide for investing in the UK, and is a real vote of confidence in Wales' growing stature as a hotbed of life sciences expertise.

It also showcases the commitment of the UK Government's globally based network of trade experts to connect international investors with the right partners for their needs.

Companies like Medical Ethics are helping to change health dynamics on a global scale and are quickly discovering that Wales is the go-to place to develop, manufacture and commercialise their innovations. The UK Government knows this and we have every intention of nurturing this industry for continued success in Wales and across the UK for years to come.

Graham Stuart, Minister for Investment, Department for International Trade said:

With a world-class network of universities, clinicians and industry professionals, Wales has a proven capacity in providing the

expertise required by both domestic and international life science companies.

It is now at the forefront of numerous pioneering developments across a wide variety of fields, from microbiology to pharmaceuticals. Medical Ethics' investment in Wales is an affirmative nod to this and, as an international economic department, DIT is thrilled to have provided support.

In the year 2016-17, DIT reported 85 investment projects in Wales, generating 2,581 jobs. Welsh companies exported more than £16.4bn of goods in 2017. The UK is the number one destination for health and life sciences Foreign Direct Investment in Europe.

ENDS

[Press release: PM speech at High Performing Teachers' Reception: 21 May 2018](#)

Good evening everyone and welcome to Downing Street.

We have teachers here from across the country, including from a school in Wimbledon Park where I used to be a governor!

One of the many wonderful things about living here and working here at No 10 is that I can draw inspiration from the countless great figures who have passed through these rooms over many years.

I was asked earlier what it feels like to feel the history of this place when you are sitting in the Cabinet Room – so many great decisions have been made here, and it has seen so many great people.

But few can claim to have shaped and influenced as many lives as the incredible people here this evening.

You educate. You inspire. You unlock the potential of young minds, turn their aspirations into reality, you nurture the innovators, leaders and entrepreneurs of tomorrow.

I was making a speech earlier today about science and the importance of nurturing innovation and creativity among our young people for the future. So teachers do a remarkable job, and you represent the best of the best. Indeed, we have among us Andria Zafirakou, who I am delighted to welcome back to

Downing Street today, who has been named as the world's best, the first ever British winner of the Global Teacher Prize.

But amazing though it is, we are not here today just to celebrate Andria's achievement. We are here to celebrate all of you, and all of your colleagues ups and down the country who do such vital work day-in, day-out.

You are completely committed to giving every child the education that is right for them.

And Damian and I are absolutely committed to helping you make that happen. You can see that from what we have achieved so far and what we are doing next.

Compared with 2010, nearly two million more children are being taught in schools that are good or outstanding. We have raised teacher numbers to record levels. We are looking at ways of reducing your workload by stripping out unnecessary bureaucracy. We are working with the profession on a new strategy to drive recruitment and boost retention.

And we are doing all of this because this is a government that supports and values teachers. Because we know that the success of every young person, in whatever they go on to do in life, is shaped by the education they receive at school.

I was just asked about what education means to me. I said what I say to young people is education is the key to unlock the door to your future, and it is so important.

Although I have to say on my first day at school I did not perhaps view it in quite the same way. Because on my very first day at primary school, the headmistress had to literally carry me, kicking and screaming, into the classroom.

I think at the time she said "look what a silly girl we have here".

Fortunately, it did not take long for me to realise and appreciate both the power of education and the impact that good teachers have on so many young lives.

That's something that stayed with me in my time as a councillor, when I was chairman of the education authority in Merton. It stayed with me as a new MP, when the very first speech I gave was about education, and in my first frontbench job, was as shadow schools minister and then as shadow education secretary.

And it is something that drives me today as Prime Minister.

When I stood on the steps outside this house almost two years ago, I talked about my desire to tackle the burning injustices facing our country today.

And education is the key to doing so, and that means teachers like you are the key to making Britain the great meritocracy it can and should be.

The generations of famous figures who have graced this room throughout history owe their successes to the teachers who inspired and educated them. Teachers just like you.

So I want to thank you, and thank all teachers, for everything you have already done to nurture the next generation.

And let me say, once again, how much I look forward to working with you so that every child in every corner of this country has the best possible start in life.”

Speech: A peaceful, secure, prosperous Libya through credible elections

Thank you very much, Madam President. Thank you to Ambassador Skoog for his briefing. And let me also very much welcome the briefing of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) Ghassan Salamé, and also for your report. We fully support your work and your efforts, SRSG Salamé, to deliver the UN roadmap.

The UK welcomes progress towards national reconciliation through the National Conference process. It is important to do all that we can to support all Libyans to have a stake in the political process. As we have said for some months now, the status quo is not sustainable, so we welcome the efforts to prepare for elections. It is extremely positive that 2.4 million Libyans have now registered to vote reflecting the popular demand for an end to the transition period and eagerness to engage in a democratic political process. Libyans want to break the political impasse and move their country forward. But the Libyan people are suffering because of divisions and disagreements between their leaders. As the UN has set out, there are three elements which need to form part of the political sequence: the constitution, parliamentary elections and presidential elections. It is important to manage that sequencing so that credible elections are delivered and stability is promoted.

So before elections can take place, Libya’s leaders must agree to an inclusive political package on the technical, security and political measures needed to ensure that elections will be inclusive, peaceful and that the results will be accepted. As an international community and a Security Council, we need to deliver a single unified message and all national efforts must be in support of, and co-ordinated with, the United Nations.

Turning to the economy, we welcome the 2018 budget agreed on 9 May which will allow the government to support vital public services. Libya’s leaders need to work together now to address the suffering of the Libyan people while preparations for elections continue. They urgently need to agree economic

reforms, to unify Libya's economic institutions and to resolve the dispute over the Central Bank Governorship.

Finally, turning to security. The lower casualty rates since the start of 2018 are most welcome, but tragedy continues to strike, including the attack on the High National Election Commission on the 2 May claimed by Da'esh. It is a stark reminder that these groups are still working to undermine the democratic process. We in the international community must make a concerted effort to help bolster electoral security arrangements so that the Libyan people can exercise their democratic right without the threat of violence. We recognise that the fighting, particularly in Sebha and Derna, demonstrates deep divisions in Libya. This fighting is increasing the suffering of the Libyan people and being exploited by extremists. And Madam President, whilst talking of exploitation, we still recall the shocking reports of what appeared to be slave auctions run by migrant traffickers. We must take action to signal that traffickers cannot act with impunity; the UK fully supports efforts to do this, including through our sanctions regime.

Madam President, 2018 is a crucial year for Libya. It presents a great opportunity to finally deliver what the people of Libya have demanded for so long: a peaceful, secure, prosperous country and an opportunity to have a say in how this is achieved through credible elections. The international community must work together with the United Nations to support Libya's leaders to deliver. To fail now is to invite more suffering, more wasted opportunities and more threats to all of our peace and security.