

News story: Defence Secretary to attend NATO meeting of Defence Ministers

This week's NATO Defence Ministerial is the first of the year and the first chance for Allies, including our Defence Secretary Michael Fallon, to meet collectively with the new US Defence Secretary Mattis.

Secretary Mattis knows NATO well from his time as Supreme Allied Commander for Transformation, a post he took up 10 years ago. But the security environment facing NATO has itself been transformed in the intervening decade. So this week's meeting is a chance for the 28 Allies to take stock on the challenges and opportunities we face, to the East and South of the Alliance, to reinforce the transatlantic bond and to affirm our commitment to deepening that link and our wider Allied engagement.

For the UK therefore, our priorities will be two-fold:

- to ensure the Alliance continues to make progress on taking forward the ambitious agenda agreed at Warsaw, in particular on modern defence and deterrence towards Russia. On that front (literally), the enhanced forward presence of NATO battlegroups is deploying this Spring to the Baltic States and Poland, with the UK proud to be leading the formation in Estonia, one of our most effective Allies in the Helmand campaign; and
- to take stock of what NATO has done since Warsaw to expand NATO's role in addressing instability on our Southern flank and beyond, including the new NATO Training and Capacity Building activity in Iraq, helping Iraqi security forces build their ability to secure the country after the defeat of Daesh.

All this requires resources and reform.

We are one of only four Allies other than the US currently meeting the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence. We support the new US Administration's focus on this burden-sharing issue.

But a more effective Alliance is not only about money. It's also about continuing to modernise our structures and ways of working to ensure the Alliance is capable of addressing simultaneously the complex and challenging world around us, including the scourge of terrorism.

So this week's Ministerial will help set this year's agenda. One where NATO builds on the achievements and decisions of the Wales and Warsaw Summits and, looking ahead to the next Summit later this year, shows it is gripping

collectively the new challenges we will face together.

Blackness Road area – roadworks clarification



Residents will have noted that the temporary traffic lights on Blackness Road at the Glamis Road/Glamis Drive roundabout (see right) have disappeared. However, this is unfortunately **not** because the works by Scotland Gas Networks (SGN) are completed.

I have been updated by Scotland Gas Networks' Team Manager as follows :

“Unfortunately our work at the Glamis Road roundabout is well behind schedule due to the ground conditions we are encountering. However, as Scottish Water (SW) is programmed to start in Blackness Road shortly which would conflict with our work, we are lifting the traffic management at the roundabout before they start and will return to complete our work here after SW have finished.

In the meantime we will be continuing on Glamis Road itself as this won't disrupt traffic, and will also be returning to Perth Road to complete the service works and mains abandonment which we had to abort previously.

Scottish Water is starting Blackness Road 20th February for approximately 2 weeks so we'll be back at the roundabout probably mid March for about 2 weeks.”

The Scottish Water work is further east on Blackness Road. The City Council has further updated me as follows :

“The SW work will start 20 February at Glenagnes Road junction. The second

week they will move south to Rosefield Street for the second week. Once SW is complete on their section of Blackness Road, SGN will return to Blackness Road Glamis with their original set up to complete works there. As SGN intimated, it will utilise the two weeks of 20/27 February, when SW are in Blackness Road, to complete the remaining services connections left behind in Perth Road at Arnhall Drive area.”

Cancer survival rates improving but early detection is key – Vaughan Gething

“Our refreshed cancer delivery plan outlines our ambition to improve outcomes to be among the best in Europe. To do this we must detect more cancers at earlier stages, so that patients can get the most benefit from the treatments available. Our annual report outlines how health boards are reorganising services to achieve this.

“Cwm Taf Health Board has developed a new route for patients who see their GP with non-specific symptoms, integrating primary care and hospital clinicians to work towards a swifter diagnosis.

“Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has significantly improved its diagnostic services; it is now one of two health organisations in the UK to introduce a digital pathology system. Coupled with Welsh Government investment in scanning technology, waiting times and travel times for patients in North Wales have significantly reduced.

“In Abertawe Bro Morgannwg, patients with a suspicious chest X-Ray are now routinely booked in for a CT scan, removing the delay involved in the GP requesting further investigations.]

“Sadly cancer is affecting increasing numbers of people in Wales. The NHS is responding and treated 8% more people in 2015/16 compared to five years earlier; with 11% more people receiving their treatment within the cancer waiting time target.

“We have increased spending on cancer from £307million in 2011-12 to £409million in 2014-15; we have invested nearly £10million for replacement linear accelerators and allocated £15m in this year’s budgets for improvements in diagnostic technology.

“Cancer survival continues to improve but we know there is more work to do. We are committed to continuing to improve and to

deliver the best treatment and care to people with cancer in Wales.”

Vice President congratulates ISRO for successful launch of 104 satellites

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