

Speech: Chancellor's speech at the National Cyber Security Centre opening

It is a pleasure to be here today at the launch of the [National Cyber Security Centre](#), having been involved in this project, in various roles, since its inception.

In my current role, as Chancellor, I know how much the internet revolution has transformed our economy. And how much it holds the promise of future growth and prosperity for our country.

But as we enter the so-called 'Fourth Industrial Revolution', we have to be alive to the fact that this transformation is not without its challenges.

The development of artificial intelligence heralds a technological revolution that will fundamentally change our lives.

But it will also disrupt existing patterns of work, life, and society.

The fact is that the greater connectivity that will enable the development of the digital economy. Is also a source of vulnerability.

And those who want to exploit that vulnerability have not been idle.

The cyber attacks we are seeing are increasing in their frequency, their severity, and their sophistication. In the first three months of its existence, the NCSC has already mobilised to respond to attacks on 188 occasions.

And high-profile incidents with Sony, TalkTalk, and TV Monde have reminded us of the scale of damage that a single successful cyber-attack can inflict.

So this new centre, and its work, is vitally important.

This is a unique institution.

Our overseas competitors can only dream of the level of interagency cooperation that underpins it.

And we in Britain can be extremely proud to be blazing a trail that others will surely follow.

There are three key points to make about the way the centre will approach its task.

First, it will not just focus on protecting against major attacks on critical national infrastructure, but also raising our security capability against day to day malicious cyber activity.

The most dramatic threats are the high-end sophisticated state-sponsored

attacks.

But the most common threat that businesses and the general public face are the less sophisticated, mass targeted attacks, from phishing to email viruses.

83% of UK businesses are online.

The average British home has 8 devices connected to the internet.

This provides enormous potential for day to day attacks, from electronic data theft to online ransom.

The ONS estimate that there were two million such incidents in the past twelve months alone.

If these numbers were included in our crime figures, the UK's crime rate would double.

So the NCSC will play a unique and crucial role bringing together the public and the business community on the one hand, and our intelligence and security agencies on the other.

Second, it will focus on partnership.

Our intelligence and security agencies are the best in the world. No question.

Our digital sector is also the best in the world – contributing a bigger proportion of our GDP every year than any other country in the G20.

And to prove it we have the highest proportion of online shoppers in Europe.

And what we are doing here is, bringing them together, this centre will work hand in hand with industry to keep the UK safe.

65% of large businesses reported a cyber breach or attack in the past 12 months.

Yet nine out of ten businesses don't even have an incident management plan in the event of a cyber breach. Business has to sharpen its approach as the scale of the threat from cyber increases and intensifies.

Just as you would expect a shop on the high street to fix its locks and burglar alarms, so businesses operating digitally need to fix their online security.

And this Centre stands ready to help them in doing that.

It can be as simple as providing guidance on things like ransomware and device security so that the public and businesses can protect themselves.

Or it could be drawing on our most sophisticated capabilities to road-test and make available safeguards against more sophisticated threats.

Or mobilising the resources of public and private sectors to intercept, defeat and mitigate the effects of a concerted cyber assault.

Either way, its success will rely on partnerships.

The third and final point I want to make is that we are prepared to invest the necessary resources to get this right.

We invested £860 million on enhancing our cyber defences in the last Parliament.

And we are investing another £1.9 billion to further bolster our armoury against cyber-attack in this Parliament, as well as developing our offensive cyber capability to deter, and if needs be, retaliate against, those who seek to do us harm in cyberspace, a new and critical domain of our defence.

And all this is set in the context of our commitment to meeting the NATO pledge to spend 2% of our national income on defence for every year of this decade.

At the beginning of this month, the UK signed the NATO Cyber Defence Memorandum of Understanding so that we can share our expertise with our international allies, and learn from their experiences.

And today I am delighted to announce a new kind of partnership, closer to home, here at this centre.

We will invite business to second up to 100 employees to come and work in the NCSC – allowing us to draw on the best and the brightest in industry – to test and to challenge the government's thinking as we take this project forward.

And for these people to then return to the private sector and draw on their experience at NCSC to drive change within industry.

Because the government cannot protect businesses and the general public from the risks of cyber-attack on its own.

It has to be a team effort.

It is only in this way that we can stay one step ahead of the scale and pace of the threat we face. I want to thank the staff here at the Centre for their dedication, commitment, and skill.

And I want to thank our industry partners for teaming up with government, to ensure that the UK becomes truly, the safest and most secure space for digital business.

Thank you.

News story: Minister Wharton emphasises need for peace in South Sudan

In the first visit by a UK Minister to South Sudan this year, Minister Wharton saw the life-changing impact of UK aid in Juba and Malakal.

The Minister spent a day visiting the Protection of Civilian (PoC) site in Malakal where he met people who have been displaced from their homes. He witnessed the desperate humanitarian situation with more than 60% of the population – 7.5 million people – expected to be in need of food and facing potential famine as the worst food crisis since independence in 2011 caused by prolonged conflict and drought threatens lives and risks destabilising the region.

Minister Wharton heard about the challenging delivery conditions from aid workers, including the need for better security and improved infrastructure. This year, UK troops will deploy to support the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), providing engineering and medical support which will enable increased security at UN camps.

In Juba, Minister Wharton met with teachers and children at the Ustrautuna Primary School and saw how the Girls' Education South Sudan initiative is transforming the lives of a generation of girls, supporting 1.3 million children and over 3,500 schools to ensure children get an education despite the conflict.

International Development Minister James Wharton said:

“South Sudan faces a worsening humanitarian crisis with over half the population in urgent, desperate need and ongoing violence forcing over a million people to flee their homes and seek refuge in neighbouring countries.

“I am proud of the lifesaving support that UK aid is providing for millions of the poorest people in South Sudan, including food, clean water, medicine, shelter and education to increase opportunities for the future.

“UK troops will support UNMISS by providing vital engineering and medical assistance to help improve security at UN camps and support UNMISS's capacity to protect civilians and ensure humanitarian access, which is central to their mission.

“The international community must now step up alongside Global Britain and help encourage the longer-term stability of South Sudan and the region, which is firmly in our interests.”

During high-level meetings with government ministers and officials, the Minister emphasised that it is first and foremost the responsibility of the country's leaders to alleviate the pressure on its people, and to work with

the UN, as well as NGOs, who are delivering vital, lifesaving aid to the South Sudanese people, and ultimately create lasting peace and stability.

The UK has provided more than £500 million of support to South Sudan over the past three years. Last year, UK aid in South Sudan:

- Fed 440,000 people
- Provided clean water and sanitation for 490,000 people
- Provided 660,000 people with health support, including mothers and children; and
- Provided 130,000 people with shelter and emergency non-food items.

[News story: Walker: Scottish views will play key part in forming EU exit plans](#)

From:

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Part of:

Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker has been visiting Fort William, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

We want to ensure every nation and area of the United Kingdom can make the most of the opportunities ahead, the Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker said during visits to Fort William, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The Minister was in Scotland to continue the Government's UK-wide engagement programme ahead of the start of EU negotiations. The Prime Minister has signalled that we will trigger Article 50 before the end of March, allowing formal negotiations to begin.

During the two day trip, the Minister travelled across the country listening to universities, businesses and charities about their top priorities for EU exit and views on how they can capitalise on the opportunities that our departure presents.

He visited both the University of Glasgow and the University of Edinburgh, the Lochaber Chambers of Commerce and Age Scotland as well as attending roundtables with key business sectors.

Minister for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker said:

It's vitally important that we get a deal that works for all of the UK, and Scotland's voice will be heard loud and clear as we prepare for the upcoming negotiations.

Over the past two days I've spoken to people across Scotland, many with extensive experience in their sector, ensuring their views are heard as they are hugely important to us as we continue to form our negotiating strategy.

Working closely with all of the devolved administrations, the UK Government has held monthly meetings of the Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) to engage with the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments.

[Press release: North Korean Ambassador summoned over ballistic missile launch](#)

From:

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Part of:

Today, the North Korean Ambassador to the UK, Choe Il, was summoned to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office following a ballistic missile launch on 11 February 2017.

A Foreign Office spokeswoman said:

The UK fully supports the UN Security Council's strong condemnation of North Korea's recent ballistic missile launch. Today, in summoning the North Korean Ambassador, we have made clear that the actions of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) were in direct violation of multiple resolutions, are a threat to international security and that such dangerous and destabilising activity must stop.

We urge North Korea to stop its provocative actions, which threaten international peace and security, and instead re-engage with the international community, and take credible, concrete steps to prioritise the well-being of its own people instead of the nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. The Ambassador was asked to convey this message to Pyongyang in the strongest possible terms.

Further information

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Press release: Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme well under way

From:

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Hagley playing fields closed to the public during scheme construction works.

The Environment Agency's Rugeley Flood Risk Management Scheme that began in December is progressing well. Preparations for the construction of the embankment have now started.

To make sure that the public stay safe while the work is being carried out, the Hagley playing fields will remain closed to the public until 2018, once the scheme has been completed.

During a flood, the embankment will hold water from the Rising Brook and help to reduce the risk of flooding for over 114 homes and 159 businesses. Other benefits of the £3.8 million scheme include improving habitat, restoring heritage features and reconnecting footpaths and improving accessibility. It also forms an integral part of Cannock Chase council's plans to regenerate parts of the town centre.

Environment Agency Project Manager Matt Griffin said:

We're working hard to get the scheme completed as soon as possible so we can minimise any disruption and inconvenience. However, keeping people and the community safe during the work remains our priority which means closing the playing fields is essential.

The works are a partnership with Staffordshire County Council, Cannock Chase District Council and Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.