

Governor Dakin's speech at TCI National Security Strategy launch: 22 January 2020

TCI now, for the first time, has a National Security Strategy. The need for TCI to have this was driven by the Premier and it became one of my first priorities, on arrival, to help her deliver it. It sat very well with my own initial priorities, outlined in my inauguration speech, around crime, illegal immigration and hurricane preparedness.

The most important line in the strategy we launch today is the last sentence of the introduction "In terms of the leadership needed to tackle National Security challenges the Premier's and the Governor's Office stand together". When it comes to the specifics of crime and policing, because national security is much more than crime, we also bring the Commissioner into this top team.

In these three roles we combine all the powers we need: funding through taxing and spending; democratic accountability; decisions around operational deployment; executive and emergency powers if needed; and the ability to reach beyond our own borders. If we were pulling against each other, or even working in parallel rather than together, none of us could deliver in the way the country rightly demands. But that's explicitly not the case.

All that I'm about to say would not have been possible without the Strategy we launch today – and the thinking that went onto it. The institutions that flow from it, help consolidate this 'top team relationship' so it's not personality dependent, but the way Government functions in the future to look after the safety and security of its people.

With one team at the top, we intend to create a 'one government team' around us to deal with these issues. The team you see with us today are among the top thirty officials in TCI Government and Policing that will execute the strategy. We are also grateful to be joined – as not disinterested observers – by the Commissioner of Montserrat, the Deputy Commissioner from Cayman and the Assistant Commissioner from Bermuda. We are strengthened by your presence Gentlemen.

All of us are presently involved in a one week training exercise run by the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst but we have taken an hour out of that course to be with you today. We are in a classroom learning – you are never too old to learn – and in learning, as much from each other – we are coming together as a team, sharing experiences, forming, storming and norming around one shared endeavour: to make this country safer.

All in this room agree that the fact this country is small should be our strength in terms of national security. Our communication and co-operation across Government should be straightforward. We should be agile. We should be

efficient. But let's be frank with each other, we are presently none of these things – so this week is important, indeed vital, in that process of change.

A public version of the strategy will be published but I suspect the public are interested today, not in what's written on paper, but what's happening as a result of the Strategy in the real world. That's what I intend to focus on. First, once you have the right strategy, you then need the right structures and the people with the right skills to implement it. So that's where I start:

- an already established National Security Council has been reimagined that can develop national capability and work at the strategic level and tackle wicked problems. That change has now occurred we are feeling the benefits. Bringing experts into the room, as required, has helped.
- since September a UK funded security advisor has been in place to help drive strategic change. The Premier and myself, and I suspect all who have come into contact with her, want to pay public tribute to Victoria for her detailed planning work. Much of what I'm about to describe, she has been instrumental in.
- I can announce today that a TCIG National Security Advisor (modelled on the role of the NSA in the UK) has been appointed who will work to both the Governor and Premier. This is a significant step forward in both tying together Government but also vesting more responsibility in Turks Islanders to manage national security. This will be Tito Lightbourne who will become the first Permanent Secretary National Security. This role will allow him to work across Government Departments with the authority of the Governor and Premier and he will co-ordinate to ensure proper cross-government working on National Security issues while being the focus for building long term national security capability.
- at the same time I can announce the promotion and appointment of two new Permanent Secretaries into the key Ministries involved in National Security. Mr Desmond Wilson will take over as PS Border Control and brings considerable experience with him as the former Director of Immigration. He also has a well-deserved reputation for action and delivery; qualities I admire.
- Ms Althea Been who moves from being a Deputy Secretary in Border Control, and will therefore be taking useful context about the challenges of that area of national security, will start as PS at Home Affairs on the 1st April. She also has a reputation for proactivity and delivery and that reassures us that she will be a first class member of the top team vital, for example, in redeveloping the Prison and all matters linked to that institution.

- funding of a National Security Secretariat, working to Tito Lightbourne has been agreed. The threats outlined in the Strategy will be managed by two senior 'Threat Leads' in the Secretariat; crucially that includes our resilience to, and recovery from, disasters. Placing that issue in the centre of Government, rather than on the side, is an important shift of emphasis.
- when we combine this NSA and Secretariat with the strong command and control function the Police have now developed at the operational level we will have a well-drilled national command structure for use in times of crisis at the strategic, operational and tactical levels. We will be rehearsing and refining this capability during the year.
- in terms of new and significant national capability we are in close touch with the UK Ministry of Defence, as you know we intend to generate a Turks and Caicos Regiment – our own Defence Force. We expect to be asking for expressions of interest for the Regiment's first Commanding Officer within weeks, followed by advertising for its regular Officer cadre shortly thereafter, before starting to recruit the 'Reserve Force' in the summer.

Looking further down into the strategy, I intend to use my remaining time today, to look at the two issues that are at the top of the public's agenda: Illegal Immigration and separately, because it's intellectually lazy to conflate the two, Serious Crime.

But before I do that I want to emphasise that the most pressing threat to our National Security – over a period of decades – is going to be natural disaster. The seas around us are warming. They provide the fuel for hurricanes, and we are in their path. You'll see in the strategy it's in the top two we must tackle – we have to move from a position where we focus on 'recovery' to one where much more effort is placed on 'resilience'. Countries in the Caribbean that don't, will go into perpetual decline, unable to recover properly between each natural disaster.

Worth also putting on record that, other than Natural Disaster, Illegal Immigration and Serious Crime, the other six issues the Strategy calls out as threats are: critical national infrastructure failure; serious public disorder; maritime sovereignty; food security and scarcity; cyber and, finally; terrorism, money laundering and financing of terrorism. Before moving onto crime let me start with what we are doing to reverse the seriously destabilising impact illegal immigration has on our society.

- without getting ahead of ourselves we now have the start of a good story to tell in terms of the interdiction of the traditional large sloops. I said shortly after my arrival in July that I intended to learn from failure and be accountable. We've studied trends, both success and failures. While ten landed in the first half of the year, from 30th August, only one large vessel has got through – and even then a number,

although not all, of its illegal passengers were arrested once they made land fall.

- the team we have on the front line protecting our maritime borders – led by Ennis Grant, Everet Warrican, Tito Forbes and Rodman Johnson are, to my mind, heroic. As a team we've been testing, adjusting and learning. Staffing at the radar has been increased, more efficient deployment of Maritime assets has been established and better cross-government working introduced.
- there's much more to do and a virtual team that pulls together the Maritime Branch, Radar and Immigration Task Force has started to take root. Linking them to the US Coastguard and Bahamian Defence Force in a wider international team, a game changer. And at this point I pay great tribute to our international partners. This is essential because we cannot be complacent: as we improve so do our opponents – Darwinian like – they evolve. We have to adapt our ways of working and capabilities rapidly; we are now starting to have the team work in place to make that happen.
- but stopping the sloops is attacking the symptom not the cause. The big change the Strategy calls out is the need to go after the under-pinning business model: prosecuting those, in TCI, and overseas if we can reach them, profiting from this trade in human cargo. To that end a significant investigation into people trafficking – led by the Police and drawing on contracted UK Police Officers – has commenced. This large investigation is working in tandem with Canadian, US and UK law enforcement. The recent arrest of 29 Sri Lankans – and congratulations to all involved in that particular success – has allowed us to look through an investigative keyhole at a global people trafficking ring. With international partners we intend to exploit that opportunity.
- with this ambition in mind – going after those profiting from the trade rather than just those trafficked – our intention is to build a secure and vetted capability on the Islands that can better collect, assess and then take action on intelligence we generate – or which is generated by our partners. Like the Defence Force, the UK are looking to support us in this and this will have strategic impact on all aspects of national security and serious crime.
- significant funding from Government to upgrade the radar has also been secured. Our intention is to make detection so likely we disincentivise travel across dangerous waters. As it is, 15 Haitians lost their lives in the waters off West Caicos last year, we assume many more in open seas. We mourn their and their family's loss while equally holding those who trafficked them, exploited them and profited from them, with contempt. They are now the targets of our criminal justice system.

- very significantly – because great efficiency and effectiveness can be delivered if we get this right – programmatic work has begun to establish a Border Force probably with different combined land and combined sea elements. The Premier has been keen on this type of reorganisation from the beginning and she was right to be so.
- funds have been secured to retrofit a seized fast vessel to strengthen the Maritime Branch that will be deployed on Grand Turk (seriously extending range).
- work has also begun with the US Coast Guard and the Bahamian Defence Force to significantly strengthen tri-lateral and bi-lateral co-operation. Lawyers are now involved in drafting future agreements. There has anyway been an immediate uptick in co-operation – some of that has been already described in the media – and we have been clear with all international parties that they shouldn't underestimate TCI's ambition. Our aim is to be a serious partner and player in the region.
- in terms of energy we have initially focussed on stemming the maritime threat, so we are excited by the appointment of Desmond Wilson who, drawing on guidance from his Minister (who of course is part of the NSC) can use the convening power provided by the PS National Security and deliver a proportionate whole of Government approach, to tackling Illegal Immigration through arresting those who overstay, or who entered illegally. There's a critical balance we must get right here in not alienating those who have every right to be here.

And now to crime:

- crime is rightly the hot topic so I will dwell on what, as Governor, Premier and Commissioner, we are doing to make a change. It's important though to recognise that while the Police take the burden of public scrutiny, Policing on its own isn't the answer. If you will indulge me to be clear, to the point of bluntness – the answer to the problem we are trying to solve won't be reached until future public co-operation is in line with present public outrage.
- policing by consent, which is our Policing model, can't succeed without public trust and public engagement. Policing can do far better on this – and recognising this fact is an important first step – so we now have a structured approach to delivering that change. But the public must meet us half way and if they don't, the investments we are making will fail. It's that important. In some ways it's that fragile.
- an increase in overall Police numbers by 20% has begun, recruits have started training and the overall uplift will be complete by March 2021.

The Commissioner tells us this increase will be a game changer; we can reinforce the very capable Tactical Unit, the Maritime Unit and crucially bring in proper Community Policing where the community gets to know their local officer through regular engagement.

- we already have 8 officers training in Barbados. The recruitment of a further 20 – also recruited from inside TCI – has been completed on schedule and they will train in the Bahamas. Recruiting the next tranche of 20 is due to begin which will include bringing in experienced overseas officers who can immediately reinforce our Tactical and Maritime Unit. Further recruitment can be fine-tuned dependent on need.
- as well as recruiting we must train existing staff – not least in terms of building a relationship with the public; our officers have been underinvested in for years. Funds for a significant uplift in Police Training have been agreed.
- a gun crime unit has been established and this has started to yield results. More guns were recovered in the two months before Christmas than in the previous two years.
- the use of a UK police officer, on island as part of the SIPT trial, but hugely experienced in murder investigations, has now been commissioned to review all murder cases. UK Police will review professional standards of conduct and performance in our Police force and separately review the structures and organisation of the Police's approach to homicide and will then remain in country to mentor. The Commissioner has other initiatives he is working on drawing on UK policing experience that we are not yet in a position to announce, but which will make an impact to the long term strength and health of the Force.
- outside of the National Security Strategy, but crucial to its success, the last Chief Justice, independently, pulled together the Justice sector (Judges, Chief Magistrate, AG, DPP, Commissioner, Prison Superintendent, Social Welfare, UK Justice Advisor) into a committee that could drive positive change in the overall Justice system. Cabinet has now been presented with a plan as to how Government can support much needed change in all aspects of justice other than Policing. This includes the like of Prison reform, parole, rehabilitation, the efficiency of the system in delivering justice and the physical environment in which justice is delivered.
- you will note from what I haven't said – and this is explicit in the Strategy – that we stay top level and we deliberately do not seek to drop down into operational policing decisions around the deployment of officers and the like. It's important that these decisions are the Commissioners, with his excellent Force Executive, so he can maintain

operational independence. What the strategy seeks to do is give him the resources, connectivity to both other parts of Government and overseas, and the context in which the Force can succeed.

Conclusion: I have spent previous press conferences expressing my heartfelt thoughts about the impact of crime. We rightly focus on murder but the truth is all crime corrodes our society and damages our people. Even new to these Islands I'd met the young man who had been simply introduced to me as 'Spooky', the DJ at the basketball games I attend.

And I'd met a previous victim of murder, Jeffrey, and thought what a convivial and engaging bar tender he was and what a great young father he must be. This is a small society where murder feels close because it is close. Not only do families grieve, but with each murder the country grieves. The most important thing I can do to honour their short lives, the most important thing we can do in this room is recognise we all have personal agency in this endeavour.

If you judge we are serious, the greatest thing you can do to honour those who have become victims is become equally serious yourself in playing your part. Many I know already feel this way. We need people actively building an ever healthier society, in whatever way they can, using whatever talent is at their disposal.

I'm not going to appeal for information (others better placed than me can do that, although I'd note it's the greatest contribution some could make) but I am – unapologetically – going to ask for national solidarity, for national unity, when it comes to national security.

I've been particularly grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for his thoughtful, measured and constructive advice, to me personally and in a more formal consultation, as we have developed this. As a national leader, but also as an ex-Police Officer, his instincts have not only been important but genuinely valuable. To the rest of you I say, given we can find so many ways to divide ourselves, this isn't one of the issues on which we need to seek division and we achieve great collective strength if we don't.

So I end with one of my favourite quotes, not biblical in this instance, but from Sun Tzu – one of history's great military philosophers: "Strategy without tactics" he wrote "is the slowest route to victory". "Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat."

TCI now has a strategy. Within it, I've just described some of the tactics we are already employing and capability we are building. I, the Premier, the Commissioner and all those in this room, representing every branch of Government involved in this shared enterprise, are committed to delivering a safe environment. I hope you can, in your own way, feel part of this because in truth you – the public – are without doubt our greatest national security asset. Extrapolating slightly from the Sun Tzu quote: national unity, around national security, would be the fastest route to success.

And with that, may God Bless these Turks and Caicos Islands.

[Change to China Travel Advice](#)



A Foreign & Commonwealth Office spokesperson said:

In light of the latest medical information, including reports of some person-to-person transmission, and the Chinese authorities' own advice, we are now advising against all but essential travel to Wuhan.

The safety and security of British nationals is always our primary concern, and we advise British nationals travelling to China to remain vigilant and check our travel advice on gov.uk.

Latest China travel advice can be found [here](#).

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[Science Minister outlines the UK's world-leading role in EdTech](#)

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Bett 2020. It's an honour to be here this morning to open this event, which showcases the very best that the EdTech industry has to offer, at a time when education sectors all over the world are trying to seize the opportunities of a technology revolution. Right here, under this magnificent ExCel roof, you can find all the latest digital tools, software and devices that are transforming classrooms across the

world.

There are robots, I understand, that pupils themselves can build, code and instruct. Scanning pens that read books out loud, to help children overcome reading difficulties, and electronic textbooks that follow a pupil's progress over computer, phone and tablet. It's a great opportunity to sample new products, whether you're a teacher, a school leader or an innovator. I hear there's even an escape room, which you can try, if you dare. I haven't had a chance to this morning, but I've challenged my department's Permanent Secretary, Jonathan Slater, to have a crack later this week, so we'll see how he gets on. Hopefully he will be able to escape!

I have the enormous privilege of opening this event at a vastly exciting time—both for the industry, and for the UK as a whole. This country is proud to be a world leader in this sector, with investments in the UK tech industry placing us 4th globally, behind only the U.S., China and India. And as the Secretary of State reiterated at the Education World Forum on Monday, which I'm sure many of you attended, we intend to continue this international leadership when the UK leaves the EU in just over a week's time.

For us, Brexit represents an opportunity: a new era of global collaboration. We'll be looking to forge even closer ties with partners across the world in all areas. But especially in EdTech, so that we can learn from each other and drive innovation forward everywhere.

But first, let me talk a bit about what we're doing in the UK to support both the industry and the education sector.

This time last year, our previous Education Secretary stood on this very stage and outlined the government's overall vision for EdTech. That vision was formalised in the publication of the EdTech Strategy, which the Department published in April.

The vision and indeed the mandate of the EdTech Strategy is as important today as it was a year ago, and our main aims remain the same: to support better use of technology where it helps teachers, school leaders and pupils, and to make sure that technology helps lift the administrative burden on our teachers, vitally not to add to it.

And we made a number of specific pledges as part of the EdTech strategy.

So, a year on, how are we getting on?

We said we'd push ahead with connecting more schools to full-fibre internet connectivity. And we have. Aiming for a target of getting everyone on a gigabit capable connection by the end of 2025, we are working with local authorities, trusts and schools to fund the installation of new full-fibre internet connections in approximately 1,700 schools across the UK—hundreds of which are to some of the most difficult to reach, rural parts of the nation.

We said we'd focus on building the capability and skills of educators. And again, we have. Over the past year, 4,500 education professionals have been able to access free online courses produced by our partner the Chartered

College of Teaching. If you're an educator here today, listening, I encourage you to do the same and benefit from this year's next round of free courses.

We said we'd seek out those schools and colleges that are already excelling in EdTech and help spread their knowledge through a demonstrator network. I'm delighted to announce today that we have now appointed a consortium to lead that network, made up of the London Grid for Learning, the Education Foundation and the Sheffield Institute of Education. As a result, the demonstrator programme will now benefit from some of the best EdTech minds in the country, who will help schools and colleges navigate new tech that could help them reduce teacher workload and support teachers and pupils alike.

We said we'd support and nourish innovators—the people who are trying to push the boundaries in EdTech, who come up with new and sometimes unusual, remarkable ideas.

So, in 2019, working in partnership with Nesta, we launched innovation fund competitions for technology that is paving the way when it comes to assessment, essay marking, timetabling and parental engagement, in a drive to improve the workload and effectiveness of these areas of work. Nesta have already announced the winners of the first round, and they include what I believe are some really great products.

Like Pobble, an online platform that allows teachers and pupils to view real examples of other children's handwritten work, to help teach writing at primary school. Pobble are here today, so go take a look at their stall if you have time. First Pass was another winner, developed by Bolton College, which I had the opportunity of visiting just last week, and which uses AI to analyse students' questions and offer real-time feedback when they need it.

I know from my own personal experience as the United Kingdom's Higher Education Minister how technology is transforming the university experience, too. During my regular visits to university campuses, it's been great to see how universities are using the best of British innovation to really grasp the breadth of opportunity of EdTech. Whether that's the use of virtual and augmented reality in teaching, or indeed software that helps better care for their students.

Nottingham Trent university, for example, are already making use of a wellbeing dashboard, which can be used to help spot students who may be struggling in the new environment, and who may be at risk of dropping out altogether. That kind of technology could make a real difference to a student's future—helping them avoid a decision that could impact negatively on the rest of their lives. If technology like the wellbeing dashboard saves just one student from dropping out when they shouldn't, it will have helped, I believe, demonstrate EdTech's worth.

Again, the government has also begun to invest in a number of similar products. Last year, we supported the launch of two pioneering digital tools that help prospective university students make informed choices as they consider which institution to attend. One, called ThinkUni, is a personalised digital assistant that pulls together data on universities, courses and their

financial outcomes. The second is a game called, TheWayUP!, which simulates different real-life graduate paths for students according to the choices they make in its virtual world.

Those are just some of the EdTech products that are transforming British classrooms and British lecture halls, and they show the great progress we're making here in the UK.

However, I also believe that the challenges we are trying to tackle with EdTech in this country aren't unique to us. They are the same challenges that teachers and students face in classrooms, and staffrooms, and lecture halls worldwide. Challenges like workload, or challenges like cheating.

So I'd like to talk a bit about what we're doing on the global EdTech scene, and how we intend to strengthen our international partnerships so that we can all tackle these challenges together.

Those efforts form part of the UK's broader International Education Strategy, which was also published last spring, and which sets out our ambition to increase international activity across all our education sectors—by increasing the value of our education exports and promoting the UK's reputation for excellence in education.

I believe that EdTech can play a fundamental role in increasing the profile of UK education abroad, and that's why some of the EdTech goals feature so prominently as part of our International Education Strategy, and will continue to do so as we look to refresh the strategy for the future.

So what are we doing to tackle EdTech's global challenges?

Well, I talked about cheating earlier. Take the use of essay mills, which have the potential to undermine the integrity of Higher Education across the world.

We have started to play a role in tackling this threat. I'm pleased to report that our universities are now forming partnerships with international software developers like Turnitin to develop and trial new plagiarism detection software that will help beat the cheats worldwide.

In other areas, UK innovators aren't simply partners; they themselves are the world leaders. Take University College London's EDUCATE programme, which I'm sure many people here will already be familiar with. EDUCATE has worked tirelessly over the past three years to support the development of 270 EdTech companies in the UK. And now they've decided to go global. Over the next 12 months UCL EDUCATE will begin franchising their mentoring and consultancy programme to a number of international universities, like CY Cergy Paris University. As they do so, they themselves will be building an impressive new digital EdTech support community that I believe will benefit everyone involved.

Likewise, the government's EdTech testbed programme, developed in partnership with Nesta, is attracting worldwide attention. The first wave of the testbed, launched with Durham University, will match schools and colleges with leading

EdTech products created to tackle specific educational challenges, like homework marking, or parental engagement.

The testbed will not only help schools and colleges understand what technology works within its given context, but will also support EdTech companies to better design their products in ways that meet the needs of teachers and students—so that it works both ways and has that positive feedback mechanism built into it. We've already had questions from countries as far and wide as Qatar and Italy about the project.

However, we think that our testbeds can and should go even further. That's why I'm pleased to announce today that in 2020 we intend to achieve a world-first, and develop a new Assistive Technology testbed aimed at transforming learning for pupils with special educational needs and disability. The testbed will help identify technologies that can help remove barriers for these pupils, allowing them to access the curriculum in ways that simply weren't previously possible.

Harnessing the power of modern technology can help us change and transform lives and unlock the potential of every child.

With technological advances happening at increasingly breakneck speed, it is only right that we ride the wave so pupils in our classrooms with special educational needs are given all the support they need and deserve.

We're sure that the Assistive Technology testbed is likely to generate just as much global interest as the first wave, and we look forward to working with other countries to help all students access a world-class education, no matter what obstacles they face.

Which brings me on to the great promise of modern technology, which is above all its capacity to tear down boundaries and bring us all, no matter which country we come from, closer together, regardless of who we are or where we're from. Those boundaries can be within the UK. But they can also be further afield.

That's why the UK government is collaborating internationally to use technology to boost education in some of the most marginalised communities in the world.

My colleagues in the Department for International Development have themselves been pioneering the use of EdTech to help improve the core numeracy and literacy skills of young people in some of those communities—like in northern Nigeria, for example, where our Teacher Development Programme gives schools access to a mobile phone app that offers advice, support and free classroom materials.

We want to make sure we're helping these communities in the best way we can, which is why in June this government announced £20 million of funding over eight years to form a global "what works" EdTech Hub. And we've joined forces with the World Bank, British universities, researchers and global education experts to create this hub, which forms the largest ever EdTech research and

innovation project. Today I am also delighted to announce that the Gates Foundation will be joining the leadership of this exciting global initiative. And we will look to launch this later this year.

The team has a stand in the cross-government section, so again, go and have a chat with them if you'd like to find out more about this amazing project.

So, as you can see, the UK is doing a number of things on a variety of different levels to lead on the world stage—and to forge ever closer ties with other countries so that we can make the most of the technological revolution together.

What about the future, though? The UK intends to keep its place at the top table of EdTech, and to do that, we plan to focus on two key areas of investment in the coming years. First, we are investing significantly to fund the next generation of digital innovators in this country—starting at the very beginning in our classrooms.

At the school level, we've put more than £80 million to create the National Centre for Computing Education, to improve the quality of computing teaching across England and to encourage more girls to take the subject. In fact, no government has ever put more money into a single national computing programme, and we're aiming for no less than to make computer science the fastest growing subject in England.

And on the college level, we've established the National College of Digital Skills, better known as Ada. Ada is named, as I'm sure you're aware, after Ada Lovelace, the mathematics and computing trailblazer, and will provide young people with the skills they need—and, crucially, the skills that employers actually want—in the future, for a wide range of digital careers.

We have also started to open the first 12 Institutes of Technology (IoTs), backed by £170m of government funding, to offer higher technical education in key sectors including digital. The South Central IoT in Milton Keynes, for example, will focus specifically on cyber security, fintech, digital and ICT. We're also tackling the higher level digital skills gap through our Institute of Coding, a consortium made up of more than 60 universities, businesses and industry experts.

Together, those measures should help create an army of new digital innovators and entrepreneurs.

But what about the cutting-edge businesses and start-ups who have already made the UK's digital tech sector the strongest in Europe? There are countless such businesses here today, flying the British flag, and our second focus of investment must be on them.

This country's tech sector is already in a very healthy place. But we want the UK to be an undisputed global science and research superpower. So we have pledged to massively boost public research and development investment, with a commitment to reach 2.4 percent of GDP, both public and private, spent on R&D by 2027. We're also going to double Government investment in R&D. We'll use

some of that money to invest strategically in cutting-edge science and fund high-risk, high-reward research, and we'll also look to reduce bureaucracy for our best scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs.

We continue to support start-ups and other innovative tech-led businesses through a range of grants, innovation loans and business development support provided through InnovateUK. And we're ensuring these businesses can access the finance they need to grow, through our investment in the British Business Bank.

All in all, this increased investment and support should ensure the UK remains one of the best places to start and grow all types of digital tech businesses—including, of course, leading EdTech businesses. So if you're a budding innovator with dreams of creating VR software that can transform a history classroom into a medieval castle or even an Egyptian tomb, you have a welcome home here. Or, if you're an entrepreneur who's had a eureka moment about EdTech, and how it can be used to reduce teacher workload, you have the environment to put that idea into practice, right here in the UK.

The future looks bright, then, both for the UK and the EdTech industry as a whole. And, as I have outlined, it will be even brighter if we can work together in partnership to serve the teachers, the school leaders, but above all to serve students, who must be at the heart of our schools. Some of those teachers and school leaders will be in this audience, so let me call on you too to share your own learning and experiences, both here at Bett and over the coming years, so that we can realise technology's full potential.

Thank you very much.

Science Minister outlines the UK's world-leading role in EdTech

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Bett 2020. It's an honour to be here this morning to open this event, which showcases the very best that the EdTech industry has to offer, at a time when education sectors all over the world are trying to seize the opportunities of a technology revolution. Right here, under this magnificent ExCel roof, you can find all the latest digital tools, software and devices that are transforming classrooms across the world.

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We said we'd support and nourish innovators—the people who are trying to push the boundaries in EdTech, who come up with new and sometimes unusual, remarkable ideas.

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I know from my own personal experience as the United Kingdom's Higher Education Minister how technology is transforming the university experience, too. During my regular visits to university campuses, it's been great to see how universities are using the best of British innovation to really grasp the breadth of opportunity of EdTech. Whether that's the use of virtual and augmented reality in teaching, or indeed software that helps better care for their students.

Nottingham Trent university, for example, are already making use of a wellbeing dashboard, which can be used to help spot students who may be struggling in the new environment, and who may be at risk of dropping out altogether. That kind of technology could make a real difference to a student's future— helping them avoid a decision that could impact negatively on the rest of their lives. If technology like the wellbeing dashboard saves just one student from dropping out when they shouldn't, it will have helped, I believe, demonstrate EdTech's worth.

Again, the government has also begun to invest in a number of similar products. Last year, we supported the launch of two pioneering digital tools that help prospective university students make informed choices as they consider which institution to attend. One, called ThinkUni, is a personalised digital assistant that pulls together data on universities, courses and their financial outcomes. The second is a game called, TheWayUP!, which simulates different real-life graduate paths for students according to the choices they make in its virtual world.

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However, I also believe that the challenges we are trying to tackle with EdTech in this country aren't unique to us. They are the same challenges that teachers and students face in classrooms, and staffrooms, and lecture halls worldwide. Challenges like workload, or challenges like cheating.

So I'd like to talk a bit about what we're doing on the global EdTech scene, and how we intend to strengthen our international partnerships so that we can all tackle these challenges together.

Those efforts form part of the UK's broader International Education Strategy, which was also published last spring, and which sets out our ambition to increase international activity across all our education sectors—by increasing the value of our education exports and promoting the UK's reputation for excellence in education.

I believe that EdTech can play a fundamental role in increasing the profile of UK education abroad, and that's why some of the EdTech goals feature so prominently as part of our International Education Strategy, and will continue to do so as we look to refresh the strategy for the future.

So what are we doing to tackle EdTech's global challenges?

Well, I talked about cheating earlier. Take the use of essay mills, which have the potential to undermine the integrity of Higher Education across the world.

We have started to play a role in tackling this threat. I'm pleased to report that our universities are now forming partnerships with international software developers like Turnitin to develop and trial new plagiarism detection software that will help beat the cheats worldwide.

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Likewise, the government's EdTech testbed programme, developed in partnership with Nesta, is attracting worldwide attention. The first wave of the testbed, launched with Durham University, will match schools and colleges with leading EdTech products created to tackle specific educational challenges, like homework marking, or parental engagement.

The testbed will not only help schools and colleges understand what technology works within its given context, but will also support EdTech companies to better design their products in ways that meet the needs of teachers and students—so that it works both ways and has that positive

feedback mechanism built into it. We've already had questions from countries as far and wide as Qatar and Italy about the project.

However, we think that our testbeds can and should go even further. That's why I'm pleased to announce today that in 2020 we intend to achieve a world-first, and develop a new Assistive Technology testbed aimed at transforming learning for pupils with special educational needs and disability. The testbed will help identify technologies that can help remove barriers for these pupils, allowing them to access the curriculum in ways that simply weren't previously possible.

Harnessing the power of modern technology can help us change and transform lives and unlock the potential of every child.

With technological advances happening at increasingly breakneck speed, it is only right that we ride the wave so pupils in our classrooms with special educational needs are given all the support they need and deserve.

We're sure that the Assistive Technology testbed is likely to generate just as much global interest as the first wave, and we look forward to working with other countries to help all students access a world-class education, no matter what obstacles they face.

Which brings me on to the great promise of modern technology, which is above all its capacity to tear down boundaries and bring us all, no matter which country we come from, closer together, regardless of who we are or where we're from. Those boundaries can be within the UK. But they can also be further afield.

That's why the UK government is collaborating internationally to use technology to boost education in some of the most marginalised communities in the world.

My colleagues in the Department for International Development have themselves been pioneering the use of EdTech to help improve the core numeracy and literacy skills of young people in some of those communities—like in northern Nigeria, for example, where our Teacher Development Programme gives schools access to a mobile phone app that offers advice, support and free classroom materials.

We want to make sure we're helping these communities in the best way we can, which is why in June this government announced £20 million of funding over eight years to form a global "what works" EdTech Hub. And we've joined forces with the World Bank, British universities, researchers and global education experts to create this hub, which forms the largest ever EdTech research and innovation project. Today I am also delighted to announce that the Gates Foundation will be joining the leadership of this exciting global initiative. And we will look to launch this later this year.

The team has a stand in the cross-government section, so again, go and have a chat with them if you'd like to find out more about this amazing project.

So, as you can see, the UK is doing a number of things on a variety of

different levels to lead on the world stage—and to forge ever closer ties with other countries so that we can make the most of the technological revolution together.

What about the future, though? The UK intends to keep its place at the top table of EdTech, and to do that, we plan to focus on two key areas of investment in the coming years. First, we are investing significantly to fund the next generation of digital innovators in this country—starting at the very beginning in our classrooms.

At the school level, we've put more than £80 million to create the National Centre for Computing Education, to improve the quality of computing teaching across England and to encourage more girls to take the subject. In fact, no government has ever put more money into a single national computing programme, and we're aiming for no less than to make computer science the fastest growing subject in England.

And on the college level, we've established the National College of Digital Skills, better known as Ada. Ada is named, as I'm sure you're aware, after Ada Lovelace, the mathematics and computing trailblazer, and will provide young people with the skills they need—and, crucially, the skills that employers actually want—in the future, for a wide range of digital careers.

We have also started to open the first 12 Institutes of Technology (IoTs), backed by £170m of government funding, to offer higher technical education in key sectors including digital. The South Central IoT in Milton Keynes, for example, will focus specifically on cyber security, fintech, digital and ICT. We're also tackling the higher level digital skills gap through our Institute of Coding, a consortium made up of more than 60 universities, businesses and industry experts.

Together, those measures should help create an army of new digital innovators and entrepreneurs.

But what about the cutting-edge businesses and start-ups who have already made the UK's digital tech sector the strongest in Europe? There are countless such businesses here today, flying the British flag, and our second focus of investment must be on them.

This country's tech sector is already in a very healthy place. But we want the UK to be an undisputed global science and research superpower. So we have pledged to massively boost public research and development investment, with a commitment to reach 2.4 percent of GDP, both public and private, spent on R&D by 2027. We're also going to double Government investment in R&D. We'll use some of that money to invest strategically in cutting-edge science and fund high-risk, high-reward research, and we'll also look to reduce bureaucracy for our best scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs.

We continue to support start-ups and other innovative tech-led businesses through a range of grants, innovation loans and business development support provided through InnovateUK. And we're ensuring these businesses can access the finance they need to grow, through our investment in the British Business

Bank.

All in all, this increased investment and support should ensure the UK remains one of the best places to start and grow all types of digital tech businesses—including, of course, leading EdTech businesses. So if you're a budding innovator with dreams of creating VR software that can transform a history classroom into a medieval castle or even an Egyptian tomb, you have a welcome home here. Or, if you're an entrepreneur who's had a eureka moment about EdTech, and how it can be used to reduce teacher workload, you have the environment to put that idea into practice, right here in the UK.

The future looks bright, then, both for the UK and the EdTech industry as a whole. And, as I have outlined, it will be even brighter if we can work together in partnership to serve the teachers, the school leaders, but above all to serve students, who must be at the heart of our schools. Some of those teachers and school leaders will be in this audience, so let me call on you too to share your own learning and experiences, both here at Bett and over the coming years, so that we can realise technology's full potential.

Thank you very much.

[Science Minister outlines the UK's world-leading role in EdTech](#)

Good morning, everyone, and welcome to Bett 2020. It's an honour to be here this morning to open this event, which showcases the very best that the EdTech industry has to offer, at a time when education sectors all over the world are trying to seize the opportunities of a technology revolution. Right here, under this magnificent ExCel roof, you can find all the latest digital tools, software and devices that are transforming classrooms across the world.

There are robots, I understand, that pupils themselves can build, code and instruct. Scanning pens that read books out loud, to help children overcome reading difficulties, and electronic textbooks that follow a pupil's progress over computer, phone and tablet. It's a great opportunity to sample new products, whether you're a teacher, a school leader or an innovator. I hear there's even an escape room, which you can try, if you dare. I haven't had a chance to this morning, but I've challenged my department's Permanent Secretary, Jonathan Slater, to have a crack later this week, so we'll see how he gets on. Hopefully he will be able to escape!

I have the enormous privilege of opening this event at a vastly exciting time—both for the industry, and for the UK as a whole. This country is proud to be a world leader in this sector, with investments in the UK tech industry placing us 4th globally, behind only the U.S., China and India. And as the

Secretary of State reiterated at the Education World Forum on Monday, which I'm sure many of you attended, we intend to continue this international leadership when the UK leaves the EU in just over a week's time.

For us, Brexit represents an opportunity: a new era of global collaboration. We'll be looking to forge even closer ties with partners across the world in all areas. But especially in EdTech, so that we can learn from each other and drive innovation forward everywhere.

But first, let me talk a bit about what we're doing in the UK to support both the industry and the education sector.

This time last year, our previous Education Secretary stood on this very stage and outlined the government's overall vision for EdTech. That vision was formalised in the publication of the EdTech Strategy, which the Department published in April.

The vision and indeed the mandate of the EdTech Strategy is as important today as it was a year ago, and our main aims remain the same: to support better use of technology where it helps teachers, school leaders and pupils, and to make sure that technology helps lift the administrative burden on our teachers, vitally not to add to it.

And we made a number of specific pledges as part of the EdTech strategy.

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