

# [News story: Autonomous last mile resupply network event – information pack](#)

The autonomous last mile resupply innovation network event was held on 23 May 2017.

At the event in London, a series of presentations provided details of three challenges that make up the Defence and Security Accelerator competition [Autonomous last mile resupply](#).

## **Event slides**

To set the scene, Accelerator Innovation Partner Mark Darvill opened the event by giving an [update on the Accelerator](#) and an overview of proof-of-concept research funding opportunities for innovative science and technology providers.

## **Challenge context and overview**

Lt Col Peter Hale and Peter Stockel, Dstl's Autonomy Innovation Lead gave an overview of the competition and outlined it's [strategic importance](#).

## **Challenge purpose and scope**

Lt Col Mark Stuart then briefed the audience on how autonomous systems would help British Army supply front line troops with vital supplies and gave examples of the types of environments the system would have to cope with. Mark Emerton, Dstl's technical lead shared scenarios which brought the challenge to life. [Details were provided from a military and technical perspective](#).

## **Competition process and overview**

Information on the [competition's scope, process and key milestones](#) was briefed by Rebecca Varney, Accelerator Competition Manager.

Graham Farnsworth, Dstl's Intellectual Property Manager outlined the new [short form contract](#).

## **How to work with the Accelerator**

The Accelerator team then outlined how organisations can [work with the Accelerator and gave advice on how to submit good proposals](#) for funding.

The competition closes at noon on 21 June 2017.

All queries will be answered by email. Send queries to our competition [DSTLLastmile@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:DSTLLastmile@dstl.gov.uk) and Accelerator [accelerator@dstl.gov.uk](mailto:accelerator@dstl.gov.uk) email inbox.

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## **Speech: “If we aren’t taking steps to address climate change, we are fighting with one hand tied behind our back.”**

Thank you Mr President.

At the outset let me thank Council members for your words of condolence and support here and elsewhere following the horrific attack in London this weekend. The perpetrators sought to terrorise us, to divide us. But make no mistake, they will fail. Together, we will defeat them, and we will need Security Council unity and activism against this terrible scourge.

Turning to this afternoon’s session, I would like to thank the Secretary-General for his briefing and I want to join others in paying tribute to you, your Excellency President Morales, for your leadership in bringing this crucial issue of transboundary water security to the Security Council.

It is an issue, which we used not to discuss in this Chamber, but I think it’s one that warrants our fullest attention. The stakes are high; over three quarters of UN Member States share river basins with another country and over 2 billion people live in shared river basins in the developing world.

Sadly, we know what can happen when the water runs dry. In Somalia, drought is driving the acute food shortage that threatens to tip over once again in to famine. One powerful lesson from the last famine in Somalia six years ago was that famine is not simply about food, but also about water. In north-eastern Nigeria, lack of water is exacerbating the man made crisis, as we saw for ourselves when we visited in March. Thousands of displaced people, the majority of whom are women and children, have become sick from diseases spread by dirty water and poor hygiene as the conflict continues.

We have to act – and we have agreed to act. Through the Global Goals, we all committed to deliver improved water security, improved access to drinking water and sanitation, and stronger transboundary water management.

And yet, the outlook for 2030 is fragile. We are simply not on track. The UN estimates that by the time we’re supposed to have achieved Global Goal 6,

demand for water in many developing countries will outstrip supply by 40%. If such scarcity is combined with weak governance, population growth, migration and climate change, we may face a potential upsurge in global conflict in the future.

This, therefore, is a clear call for preventative diplomacy, as so many of my colleagues have already said –all of us in this room have a part to play, Mr President.

In South Asia, for example, the United Kingdom has provided 30 million dollars towards water governance over the past five years. One billion people across Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Pakistan rely heavily on just three rivers. And despite facing similar problems posed by water demand and climate change, regional collaboration between these countries is limited.

That's why we have supported a regional approach to these rivers in order to address the shared challenges of development and climate change. We're working with the World Bank's South Asia Water Initiative, bringing together different disciplines and experiences –technical and political – across the region so that together we can identify and resolve challenges affecting these transboundary waters.

But to tackle this problem on a global scale, we'll need more than bilateral or regional action. We'll need to work together, through this institution and others. Holding this briefing is an important step, but this effort needs to be sustained; we cannot solve it through one meeting a year.

The G20 also has a role to play, including through incentivising water cooperation. This isn't just an issue for the developing world; the OECD and Global Water Partnership estimate that water insecurity costs the global economy 500 billion dollars every year, and yet we fall a long way short of meeting the 198 billion dollars of global investment that is needed every year for water governance and infrastructure.

So we need to see investment in the institutions and infrastructure to deliver improved water security within states and between states. Building effective institutions and delivering better governance is just as critical as building infrastructure. The G20 can play a critical role through diplomatic efforts, development cooperation, and harnessing the potential of the private sector, governments and communities to mobilise investment in water security.

Finally, Mr President, if we're to make progress on this issue before 2030, we need to see the bigger picture. Across the world, climate change is undermining water security. In almost all climate change scenarios the world's driest regions become drier and across the globe flooding will become more common. If we aren't taking steps to address climate change, we are fighting with one hand tied behind our back.

The Paris Agreement provides the right global framework for protecting the prosperity and security of future generations, while keeping energy

affordable and secure for our citizens and businesses. The United Kingdom played a major role in securing the Paris Agreement and I'm proud to restate in this Chamber today that we are wholly committed to it.

Thank you Mr President.

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## [Press release: Report 10/2017: Partial collapse of a bridge at Barrow upon Soar](#)

### **Summary**

At around 23:50 hrs on 1 August 2016, a bridge carrying Grove Lane in Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire, over the Midland Main Line, partially collapsed and a large volume of masonry fell onto the railway lines below. At the time of the collapse, core sampling work was being undertaken to investigate localised subsidence in the footpath on the south side of the bridge. The bridge was closed to the public when the collapse occurred, but the railway lines below were open to traffic.

When the coring had reached about 1.4 metres below ground, water appeared at the surface and shortly afterwards, the adjacent wall fell away from the side of the bridge, taking with it part of the footpath, a length of cast iron water main and the core sampling rig. Five workers were able to get clear as the collapse occurred and no-one was injured. Two of the four railway lines through the bridge were completely obstructed and there was debris on a third. There were no trains on the immediate approach to the bridge at the time of the collapse.

The RAIB investigation found that the incident occurred because the bridge wall, built around 1840, was not designed to resist overturning. It had also been weakened by a full-height vertical crack. The water main, which ran close to the vertical crack, probably had a slow leak which was causing on-going subsidence in the footpath. Prior to 1 August, however, there was no evidence that the wall was at risk of imminent collapse.

The coring work on the night of the incident disturbed the pressurised water main and it ruptured. The consequent release of water behind the wall quickly overloaded it and caused the wall to overturn about its base.

Underlying the incident was the lack of understanding of the risk posed to the structure and to the open railway from coring in proximity to the water main.

## Recommendations

The RAIB has made two recommendations to Network Rail. The first relates to the competence of its staff and contractors, and the availability of information to enable them to manage the potential risk to its structures from breaches of water utilities. The second relates to the provision of appropriate engineering input to risk assessments for intrusive investigations and masonry repairs on bridges carrying water services. A further recommendation is made to Network Rail's contractor, Construction Marine Limited, about the improvement of processes relating to street works and the location of water services.

The report has identified a learning point to reinforce the requirement for bridge examiners to report evidence of underground services and any changes since the previous inspection to enable a possible connection to be drawn between a water main and observations of defects on the bridge.

## Notes to editors

1. The sole purpose of RAIB investigations is to prevent future accidents and incidents and improve railway safety. RAIB does not establish blame, liability or carry out prosecutions.
2. RAIB operates, as far as possible, in an open and transparent manner. While our investigations are completely independent of the railway industry, we do maintain close liaison with railway companies and if we discover matters that may affect the safety of the railway, we make sure that information about them is circulated to the right people as soon as possible, and certainly long before publication of our final report.
3. For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

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**Speech: "These are the cold, calculating actions of a regime that**

## chooses to starve its fellow Syrians into surrender.”

Thank you Mr President, and thank you Stephen for your powerful briefing and for all that you do on this crucial issue.

We're meeting today exactly five months since a ceasefire was declared in Syria. Sadly, as Stephen has set out, it's a ceasefire that exists in name only. The past five months have seen continued fighting, continued atrocities, continued destruction. Throughout, civilians have been maimed and killed, starved and besieged. And in towns like Khan Sheikhoun, they've been exposed to the very worst of humanity.

Like many others here in this Chamber, we cautiously welcomed the ceasefire and the Astana agreement on de-escalation zones. After six years of fighting, we're all ready to support a genuine effort to bring an overdue end to the bloodshed. But the fact is, Mr President, the Astana plans have done little to help the people of Syria. Instead, so far, they have done a great deal to help the regime and its allies. The guns have fallen silent only where it has suited them. The guns have been deafening elsewhere.

So in some places, yes, there has been an overdue reduction in the violence. But only where it suits the regime. We need only ask the people of Daraa province, one of the four so-called de-escalation zones, what the ceasefire feels like on the ground. Last week barrel bomb after barrel bomb, airstrike after airstrike rained down on opposition-held areas there. Is that what the regime means by ceasefire? Is that what they mean by de-escalation?

And just as the attacks have continued, so have the sieges. At the end of April, the UN estimated over 620,000 people were living under siege in Syria, the overwhelming majority in towns and villages besieged by the regime and its allies. How can anyone claim there is a ceasefire in place when the equivalent population of Las Vegas is being besieged? Quite simply, you can't.

Going hand in hand with continued attacks and continued besiegement is the continued failure to improve humanitarian access. As Stephen said, in the last two months, just only one aid delivery to an area besieged by the regime. That delivery was too little, too late, providing supplies for the bare minimum of the population.

And yet it doesn't have to be this way. The United Nations is standing by, ready to deliver aid and medicine to those in critical need. They know the route they'll take. They have the assurances they need from the opposition. And they have the mandate to act; all of us around this table have agreed, in countless resolutions, that access must be granted.

But instead, the UN teams are forced to wait. Not for aid, not for supplies, but, instead, for the regime's letters of approval; letters that never

arrive. So the children continue to go hungry and the sick and wounded continue to die in pain. This isn't about bureaucracy or about paperwork; these are the cold, calculating actions of a regime that chooses to starve its fellow Syrians into surrender. You can see why the UN judges that this kind of behaviour constitutes war crimes.

In light of these continuing atrocities, it's clear that the guarantors of the Astana process need to do more, so much more, to make the ceasefire and de-escalation zones a reality.

This must mean a genuine end to the violence – a ceasefire in deed and not just in thought. It must mean effective and impartial monitoring mechanisms, ideally reporting to this UN Security Council, so that those who violate the ceasefire are named and held to account.

And it means sustained humanitarian access for the UN and its partners, with the UN being allowed to assess what each de-escalation zone needs. Those with influence over the regime, must ensure that this access is given; it is long overdue.

Above all, Mr President, if there is to be long-term peace in Syria, there has to be full implementation of Resolution 2254, as our Egyptian colleague has just said, and there has to be justice. There has to be justice for the people of Khan Sheikhoun, for the people of Aleppo, for the people of so many places across Syria who have endured for so many years.

Without these steps, there simply isn't a credible plan; there is just the fiction that we have today. It is a fiction where ceasefires exist and yet bombs still fall. It is a fiction that has endured for too long.

Thank you.

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## **Press release: Montenegro joins NATO**

Responding to Montenegro's accession to NATO, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:□

NATO is the bedrock of our collective security and I welcome Montenegro as the 29th member. The UK has long been a firm supporter of Montenegro's accession, as well as its commitment to reform and progress. I congratulate them on a historic step forward.

Montenegro now takes on both the benefits and responsibilities of NATO membership and collective defence. We look forward to building on our close relationship for the defence and security of our

citizens.