

# News story: Government agrees joint work on international crime

The Prime Minister Theresa May and President Donald Trump today committed to tackle the global threat posed by transnational criminal organisations – including illegal opioid traffickers.

A high-level group chaired by Home Secretary Sajid Javid and US Attorney General Jeff Sessions will work to reduce the significant harm caused by these organisations, such as by improving our ability to pursue ‘high-value’ targets and their interests.

## **Understanding the threats**

The group will also find opportunities for partnerships with industry to improve our understanding of threats and work with other countries on the socio-economic factors which perpetuate transnational organised crime.

Other measures include:

- A joint UK-US ministerial taskforce on synthetic opioids, led by a Home Office minister, focused on sharing expertise in detection and tracking, specialist law enforcement intelligence capabilities and prevention and treatment.
- A joint UK-US Strategic Dialogue on illicit finance, led by senior officials to tackle shared threats and work with other countries to maintain and strengthen implementation of global standards, scheduled to meet for the first time in September 2018.
- An informal, ad-hoc dialogue between law enforcement officials which will assess the work of current initiatives and groups, such as the Five Eyes Law Enforcement Group.

The joint taskforce on synthetic opioids will build on major pieces of work carried out by the UK government in recent years. The Forensic Early Warning System identifies harmful drugs before they gain a foothold and the landmark Psychoactive Substances Act put a blanket ban on harmful substances.

During his first visit to the US in May, the Home Secretary met US Attorney General Jeff Sessions and US Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen. During both meetings, the opioids threat was raised and both parties agreed to continue cooperation.

## **International challenge**

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Synthetic opioids like fentanyl pose a huge threat. Suppliers attempt to develop new formulations of similar drugs to try and

keep a step ahead of law enforcement and legislation.

The UK government has changed the law to stay on the front foot against criminals and invested in cutting-edge technology to detect drugs and other illegal goods at the border.

But tackling synthetic drugs is an international challenge, with suppliers able to produce and ship their drugs around the world. That is why we agree with the US government that it is vital that all countries should implement tougher domestic controls on drug production.

Fentanyl and its analogues – substances with similar but slightly altered chemical structures – are a group of powerful synthetic opioids. They have similar effects to other opioids such as morphine and heroin but are significantly more potent.

Although to date fentanyl seizures in the UK can be measured in small quantities, this equates to many millions of lethal doses.

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## **News story: US-UK Trade and Investment Working Group, London – statement**

The United Kingdom and the United States held the fourth meeting of the UK-U.S. Trade and Investment Working Group on 10th and 11th July, and the second meeting of the UK-U.S. Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME) Dialogue on 9th July.

The Working Group, established in July 2017 by UK Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade the Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP and United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, is focusing on providing commercial continuity for UK and U.S. businesses, workers, and consumers as the UK leaves the EU and exploring ways to strengthen trade and investment ties.

The Working Group is also laying the groundwork for a potential, future free trade agreement once the UK has left the EU, and exploring areas in which the two countries can collaborate to promote open markets and free and fair trade around the world.

The delegations were led by officials from the Department for International Trade (DIT) and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) and included representatives from a wide range of UK and U.S. government departments and agencies.

The UK and United States are working together to deepen their strong trade and investment relationship. The Working Group covered a range of topics, including industrial and agricultural goods; services and investment, including financial services; digital trade; intellectual property rights; regulatory issues related to trade; and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs).

The second meeting of the UK-U.S. SME Dialogue brought together UK and U.S. SMEs with government officials from both countries. Delegates discussed ways to deepen trade and investment and enhance SME cooperation including:

- resources available from both governments to assist SMEs with their export plans
- access to finance and wider business support for SMEs
- trade-related regulatory issues U.S. and UK SMEs have encountered
- intellectual property protection

Since the launch of the Working Group, in addition to launching the SME dialogue, the UK and United States have:

- Jointly released: 1) the 'Doing business in the U.S. and UK: [resources for small business' guide](#) as a key tool for SMEs seeking to benefit from U.S.-UK trade, and 2) [intellectual property protection toolkits](#) for SMEs;
- Agreed to raise awareness of the close regional connections between the UK and U.S. in the ocean and marine technology sector (i.e. Blue Economy) and explore pilot opportunities for U.S.-UK trade promotion and trade-show collaboration focused on SMEs in 2019;
- Agreed to hold the 3rd UK-U.S. SME Dialogue in the United States before the end of the year, with a focus on digital trade opportunities for SMEs;
- Identified short-term cooperative initiatives to support each country's world-class intellectual property framework, including sharing insight on enforcement approaches, policy tools, and voluntary initiatives for addressing online infringement.
- Entered into an historic Science and Technology agreement, which establishes a foundation for enhanced research partnerships to further world-class science and technological innovation;

Also, the United States and the Organization of American States extended the invitation to the United Kingdom to attend the 10th Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE) October 21-28 in California's Silicon Valley and surrounding areas to explore potential public-private sector partnerships.

## **Background**

Trade between the two countries is already worth about £165 billion a year, the United States is the single biggest source of inward investment into the UK, and together there is around £500 billion invested in each other's economies.

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## **News story: Independent chemical weapons experts invited to the UK to assist in Amesbury investigation**

The UK has invited independent technical experts from the international chemical weapons watchdog to travel to the UK early next week to independently confirm the identity of the nerve agent which has resulted in the death of one British national in Amesbury, and has left another in a serious condition in hospital.

Peter Wilson, UK Permanent Representative to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), has written to the Organisation's Director General inviting them to assist in accordance with Article VIII 38 (e) of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

During their visit they will be able to collect samples to inform this work. These samples will be analysed at highly reputable international laboratories designated by the OPCW.

The use of chemical weapons is unacceptable and contravenes international law. The UK remains committed to upholding the integrity of the OPCW as the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention overseeing the global ban on their use.

### **Further information**

- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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### **Further information**

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## [Press release: Heathrow's flying visit to West Cumbria](#)

Heathrow is creating four regional support hubs, in various locations, in order to spread the economic benefits of their expansion around the UK.

We submitted an expression of interest in turning the former Alcan site at Lillyhall into a 'Heathrow Hub' on behalf of our supply chain and local stakeholders, including Cumbria's Local Enterprise Partnership, Allerdale Borough Council, Copeland Borough Council, Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster, Sue Hayman MP (Workington) and Trudy Harrison MP (Copeland).

If successful the site could be used as a base for logistics, manufacturing and construction. It has already made the 'long-list' after initial expressions of interest were whittled down from 121 to 65.

A delegation from Heathrow has been visiting each of the 65 sites over several months – today was our turn. As well as the Alcan site, the delegation visited the Port of Workington.

Our head of community and development, Jamie Reed, and our head of community relations, Gary McKeating, hosted the visit, which was also attended by stakeholders including Sue Hayman, Mark Fryer, deputy leader of Allerdale Borough Council, Pat Graham, the Chief Executive of Copeland Borough Council and John Grainger, from Britain's Energy Coast Business Cluster.

### **What has Heathrow's expansion got to do with Sellafield?**

Creating resilient economies is one of the objectives of our Social Impact Strategy – that means we've made a commitment to helping drive new economic opportunities for the region (as well as increasing the scale, diversity and development of existing sectors).

In short that means that we have a strategic aim to help improve the short and long term economic prospects of the region – and an opportunity like the one presented by Heathrow's expansion could have a significant and sustainable positive impact.

### **What happens next?**

Heathrow will take some time to further consider the next steps, and will come back to those long-listed to seek more information and invite formal bids after shortlisting.

If successful we'll work in collaboration with partners in West Cumbria to develop a formal bid.