

## **Speech: Sir Alan Duncan interview at Foreign Affairs Council – June 2018**

The United Kingdom looks forward to continuing its close association with Turkey following the result of the elections yesterday and we will continue to work very closely with them as we have done since the day of the attempted coup.

Today the top topic I think really is Yemen. I've been going to Yemen for 30 years and we need to see a proper political solution there, which restores Government throughout the country and finds a way of putting an end to this dreadful conflict, which is causing so much humanitarian pain.

And the other topic is Venezuela where what we are seeing is economic collapse caused by the Government itself. This is avoidable. And the region and we all need to work very closely together to try and restore economic success and stability in Venezuela, before it causes even more misery and mayhem.

[Sir Alan Duncan's remarks to media](#)

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## Press release: Water quality improvements signal end for 1980s river equipment

Lea Marston lakes were created in the 1980s to collect contaminated sediment flowing down the River Tame from Birmingham and Minworth sewage treatment works. An automatic trash screen was built to collect logs and other debris to protect the equipment used to remove the contaminated sediment. It was never installed to protect people from flooding.

Over the last 30 years water quality in the River Tame has improved dramatically, and for over 15 years there has been no need to clear the sediment. This has meant that the lakes have become a wildlife haven for birds and other animals.

The trash screen costs over £200,000 each year to run and maintain and it has now got to the end of its design life. So, as it is not providing any environmental benefit and it's not reducing flood risk, the Environment Agency are planning to decommission it.

This will lead to further improvements in water quality; logs and other natural debris are good for healthy rivers as they create natural shallows and deep areas which is really good for fish and aquatic life.

Neil Lote, from the Environment Agency said:

We're really pleased to see the work we've been doing to improve river water quality have such wide benefits. The screen isn't reducing flood risk, and is actually acting as a barrier to further environmental improvements to the lakes and the river, so it makes sense to remove it.

After the Environment Agency remove the screen, they will be able to take more accurate measurements of water levels so their flood alerts and warnings will be more accurate as the water level won't be artificially altered by the screen.

The Environment Agency will closely monitor the lakes and the River Tame before they totally remove the screen to make sure the river is flowing as their expert assessments have shown.

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