

News story: Manhattan Bridge safety bulletin published

Safety warning issued following a fatal auxiliary boiler explosion on container ship Manhattan Bridge at Felixstowe container terminal.

The MAIB has today issued a safety bulletin to highlight urgent safety lessons that have arisen following the auxiliary boiler explosion on board the container ship Manhattan Bridge at Felixstowe container terminal, England resulting in one fatality and one serious injury on 19 January 2017.

The bulletin contains details on the background and events leading up to the accident, initial findings, the safety issue and safety lessons, [read more](#).

The Marine Accident Investigation Branch is assisting the Japan Transport Safety Board (JTSB) in carrying out an investigation and the JTSB will publish a full report in due course.

Speech: “We cannot turn a blind eye to activities undertaken by Iran which violate Security Council resolutions.”

Thank you Mr President. And thank you to Jeff, Sebastiano, and Joao for sharing your analysis with the Council today.

I’m glad that my last open session in this Council is focusing on one of the most important diplomatic achievements in recent memory.

As the third Secretary-General’s report on resolution 2231 shows, at its core this is a diplomatic achievement that does endure. Earlier this month, the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed Iran’s continued full compliance with its nuclear-related commitments. Iran’s total stockpile of uranium remains within agreed limits, and Iran has continued to permit and facilitate monitoring of its nuclear sites.

I reiterate in this Chamber today the United Kingdom’s commitment to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and our support for its full and equitable implementation.

To ensure the deal’s continued success, Mr President, all parties must fully uphold their commitments and improve mutual trust and cooperation across a

full range of issues. Sadly the latest report of the Secretary-General does highlight some less than positive issues which must be addressed in relation to the provisions of Annex B as set out in Resolution 2231.

The first of these relates to the 29th of January launch this year by Iran of a Khorramshahr medium-range ballistic missile. Since we've already had several Council sessions on this important issue and further consideration in the "2231 format" of the Council, I won't dwell on it. But just for the sake of clarity, I want to reiterate our position that this launch was inconsistent with the provisions of Resolution 2231. We reiterate too, the Secretary-General's call on Iran to refrain from any future launches which contribute to regional instability.

We are also concerned by the continued reported violations of restrictions prohibiting conventional arms transfers as set out in the Secretary-General's latest report, including new evidence of an attempted arms shipment from Iran to Somalia.

Furthermore, the widespread reports of multiple violations of travel ban provisions, including new infringements by Major General Qasem Soleimani, are particularly worrying given the regional sensitivities.

So putting all these issues together, it is clear that these activities are having a detrimental impact on regional security. Yes, we agree with Iran that the biggest threat to the region is a shared threat to us all; we all need to combat ISIL and defeat terrorism. Yes, we want the international community to work with Iran to encourage it to play a more transparent and constructive role in regional affairs. But we cannot turn a blind eye to activities undertaken by Iran which violate Security Council resolutions and sponsor proxy forces in regional conflicts. This further complicates efforts to reach peaceful settlements and undermines Iran's future prosperity and security.

Finally, it is important that we remember the inherent reciprocity of the JCPOA. So, we encourage all Member States and parties to the agreement to uphold their commitments, including ensuring that the Iranian people gain further tangible benefits from sanctions relief. We are encouraged by the progress being made to promote trade and investment opportunities in Iran, and we hope that the next 6 months will build on these successes. Full implementation of the provisions of Resolution 2231 by all parties is the only way to ensure the continued success of this important deal.

Mr President,

As this is my last session in the open Chamber, I did also just want to say a very brief word of thanks to the interpreters for making me comprehensible in 6 languages, it's not easy – my aunt used to do it. Secondly, to all of you for the cooperation that you've shown me and for the work that you do in what is a massively important institution that is very important for the most vulnerable of all people on this planet.

Thank you.

Speech: “The spectre of biological, chemical, or nuclear materials falling into terrorist hands is the nightmare scenario.”

Thank you Mr President. Thank you also to USG Nakamitsu and her team, and particularly to Joe Ballard. It's always good to have the OPCW with us here in this Chamber and the cooperation between our institutions is vital.

While this agenda item is a regular feature of this Council's programme of work, there is in fact nothing regular about it. The spectre of biological, chemical, or nuclear materials falling into terrorist hands is the nightmare scenario for many of us in this Chamber.

The use of such materials by terrorists is sadly not a hypothetical. Thanks to the hard work of the Joint Investigative Mechanism in Syria we know what happens when terrorists' hateful intent is paired with these equally hateful weapons. We saw the results in Daesh's sulphur mustard attack on Marea in August 2015, leaving residents blistered and burning. Other cases are also under investigation.

Clearly, preventing weapons of mass destruction falling into terrorist hands is a vital lynchpin for preserving international peace and security.

That's why it's so crucial that, following the Comprehensive review and the adoption of resolution 2325, the Committee focuses on reaching the ultimate goal of full worldwide implementation; turning 1540 into reality. As the Committee does this, it must take account new and emerging challenges from the evolving terrorist threat and advances in science and technology.

The Committee must also look to improve technical assistance, including by strengthening the 1540 Committee's process for matching Member States' requests for support with offers for assistance. And we must do all we can to encourage Member States to submit their reports on national implementation of 1540. That applies in particular to those few remaining states yet to submit a national report.

So there is a lot to do, Mr President. But the Committee shouldn't do it alone. Indeed, the challenges we face are far too great to just rely on the 15 governments around this table. We must strengthen regional and international cooperation and outreach to civil society and industry to support implementation efforts. Every country and every sector has a role to play and we should embrace their help.

Mr. President,

While we must take every step to ensure that these terrible weapons never fall into the hands of terrorists, we must also never overlook the horrific, and sadly growing, allegations of use of these weapons by state actors.

The United Kingdom unreservedly condemns the use of any chemical weapon in any circumstance. In particular, we're horrified at reports that Kim Jong Nam was apparently killed with VX in Malaysia earlier this year. If it's confirmed that a nerve agent, one banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention, was used at the instigation of a state, then this would be yet another troubling rejection of international norms.

The United Kingdom has also concluded that the Assad regime has continued to use chemical weapons against its own people, in breach of international law and the rules of war. We look forward to receiving further reporting from the OPCW Fact Finding Mission on chemical weapons use in Syria. Once we have the results of those investigations, the international community must then send a united response.

Let me close by calling on the 1540 Committee to redouble its efforts. The United Kingdom is committed to playing our part in ensuring that the Committee succeeds in its vital task ahead. The cost of failure, of allowing further weapons of mass destruction to fall into the hands of those who wish to wreak havoc, is simply too high to bear.

Thank you.

[News story: Introducing the Open Call for Innovation](#)

From 3 July 2017, the Enduring Challenge will be known as the Open Call for Innovation. This change is first of several planned changes for this funding route.

The [Open Call for Innovation](#) will continue to provide a route into defence and security for any supplier who thinks they have an idea that can benefit UK Defence and Security, at home or abroad. It exists because we can't possibly know all the potential solutions and novel approaches out there – whether that's more advanced technical capability, how we work or operate, or how we train our people. As well as all our existing suppliers, we want to attract those who haven't worked with defence and security before.

Earlier today, we held the final decision conference for the Enduring Challenge. We're delighted that 21% of proposals were approved for funding from cycle 3. The decisions have been released in the Accelerator submission service and the successful winners should be on contract within 3 weeks.

Those who were unsuccessful will receive feedback by the end of July.

Since its [launch in January](#) by Harriett Baldwin, Minister for Defence Procurement, the Enduring Challenge has held 3 decision conferences to assess 83 proposals. 12 applications (14%) were approved for funding and received an average of £82,600 in research funding.

Cycle 4 is currently in assessment. Cycle 5, under the new banner of Open Call for Innovation is open.

News story: Potential Army Officers meet Defence Secretary

The latest intake of the Army's School of Education's Potential Officer Development Programme (PODP) visited MOD Main Building in London this Tuesday as part of their intensive 12-week development programme.

As part of their visit, the potential officers had the opportunity to meet and put questions to Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon during a question and answer session.

In welcoming the students to the Ministry of Defence, Sir Michael said:

Our Armed Forces are held in high esteem, and recent events have shown that in difficult times people look to us for support.

And in such challenging times, it will be vitally important that our future leaders are thinking soldiers, capable and able to adjust to and overcome those threats which come against us.

We need the best people of each successive generation. You've got what it takes to be our future leaders, and I look forward to you not just making it to Sandhurst but spearheading our nation's charge towards a brighter future.

Potential Officer Annabelle Mash, 21 from the Isle of Wight said:

I am passionate about working in an organisation with a disciplined environment where there is the opportunity for me to develop as a person and with the ability to lead men and women confidently.

The Potential Officer Development Programme has been essential to my development, enabling me to develop my weaknesses and acting as a stepping stone towards my future career.

Potential Officer Reece Munnery, 22 from Tavistock, currently serves as a Private in the Parachute Regiment. Before joining the programme he served as a Section Second in Command. He said:

The Potential Officer Development Programme course has been very helpful in reassuring me that commissioning is the route I would like to go down, in building my confidence, and has been one of the most enjoyable courses I have attended in my Army career.

Potential Officer Moiz Abusin, 23 from Chertsey, completed his secondary education abroad in Dubai, before completing a degree in Electrical and Electronic Engineering at the University of Nottingham.

He said:

I aspire to lead a life of adventure, achievement and service. Whether leading a platoon of soldiers on operations or helping to build critical infrastructure and rebuild lives after a natural disaster, I relish the prospect leading a life far from routine.

The programme supports serving soldiers and direct entry civilian candidates by equipping participants with the skills necessary to pass the Army Officer Selection Board (AOSB).

On completion of the PODP, students will attend the AOSB to determine whether they are suitable for commissioning. If successful at this stage, they will then go on to begin Officer Cadet training at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst (RMAS).