

News story: UK Government leads Burns Night celebrations around the world

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan will host tonight's reception, where guests will be welcomed by bagpipes, enjoy a whisky tasting, and listen to Scottish folk singer Katy Thompson, who will perform 'My Heart is in the Highlands' and 'My Love is Like a Red Red Rose'. In addition, Ryan Hunter, 2nd year BA Acting student from at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, will recite Burns' poem 'A Mans A Man for A' That'.

Address to a Haggis

The video shows UK Government staff and Scottish service personnel including Major Jonny Rourke, Lieutenant Colonel Gordon Mackenzie, Bombardier Steven Cunningham and Chief Petty Officer John Boyle reciting Burns' most famous work, the 'Address to a Haggis'.

Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell said:

This week the whole country will celebrate the life and work of Robert Burns, one of Scotland's greatest cultural icons. His works are justly famous right across the globe. From Ayrshire to Atlanta, and from Cumbernauld to Canberra, on Wednesday Burns' work will be celebrated in homes and Burns societies all over the world.

Burns' legacy remains relevant around the world, and as someone from Dumfries, Burns has always played an important part in my life. On Burns Night, I will be promoting Scotland's fine produce at a reception with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. And, of course, toasting the Bard with a wee dram of "guid auld Scotch."

Foreign Office minister Sir Alan Duncan said:

The clue is in the name – my father and many Duncans before us were born and brought up in Wick, Caithness, so I'll be in my Duncan tartan tonight.

Burns' enduring global influence demonstrates the impact of Scottish culture around the world and I know that Burns night will be celebrated all over – not just by British troops, embassies, aid workers and expats, but by people from many countries throughout the world. It shows us that Burns' appeal is as strong as ever.

News story: Italy vs Wales rugby match in Rome: consular advice

From:

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Part of:

The Italy and Welsh Rugby teams will meet in Rome for their RBS 6 Nations Rugby Tournament on 5 February 2017 at 3pm.

The Consular Services of the British Embassy Rome have advice for Welsh supporters travelling to see the match.

Travelling rugby fans normally prepare well for their trips, don't get into fights, don't overindulge, don't lose their passports and don't normally come to our attention. Keep it up!

However, to avoid getting into trouble, here's a bit of advice:

- check that your passport is valid for your whole trip to Italy;
- make sure that you bring your [European Health Insurance Card \(EHIC\)](#) – this proves your entitlement to free/reduced cost health care if you need medical attention;
- the EHIC does not replace comprehensive [travel insurance](#) though, so make sure you're insured. Insurance could cover the entire cost of hospitalisation, and repatriation should that become necessary;
- keep an eye on your possessions at all times: pickpockets operate in large crowds and on most public transport.

The emergency numbers in Italy are:

- 112: Carabinieri
- 113: police
- 118: emergency ambulance
- 115: fire brigades

Practical information:

- the venue for this match will be the Olympic Stadium in Rome. Kick-off time is at 3pm, Italian time. The Stadium opens at 1pm. You should try to arrive early as access to the stadium might take some time and certainly before 2pm;
- a fan zone at Parco del Foro Italico (next to the Stadium) is open from 10am on Sunday;

- there is no parking at the Stadium so don't arrive by car;
- disabled car parking spaces are located outside the Carraia Nord, in [Largo Ferraris IV](#), where you will be directed to the Tribuna Tevere to access the Stadium;
- Italian police and stewards will conduct ticket checks and security screening. You might be required to show an original identity document. Any items that could be used as a weapon, like glass or plastic bottles, are not permitted inside the stadium;
- note also that musical instruments, large umbrellas and items of luggage are not permitted inside the Stadium;

How to get to the Olympic Stadium:

- take Metro Line A to Flaminio/Piazza del Popolo and walk to the Stadium (4.5 Kms) for about 30 minutes, or you can take tram no. 2 from Flaminio which drops you close to the Stadium. Alternatively take bus 910 from Roma Termini, get off at Piazza Antonio Mancini, then walk through the park, over the Bridge Duca D'Aosta and you'll see the Stadio Olimpico;
- combined Metro and bus/tram tickets can be purchased from most tabacconists, bars, or vending machines at metro stations and major bus stops and cost €1.50 each. Please note that bus and tram tickets must be stamped in the small yellow ticket machine found on buses and trams as soon as you start your journey. Failure to do so will result in a fine, if checked by an inspector.

If things go wrong and you need consular assistance, call us on +39 06 4220 0001.

Check out our [Italy travel advice](#) before you go.

[News story: Innovation to drive affordable energy and clean growth under Industrial Strategy](#)

- research and innovation lead to new products, services, and more effective ways of doing business with a lower carbon impact

- to get every part of the UK firing on all cylinders we need to deliver an energy infrastructure system fit for the 21st century
- investment in innovation will help to commercialise our world-leading ideas and place UK companies at the forefront of developing low carbon growth solutions

The [Industrial Strategy green paper](#) highlighted the government's commitment to minimise business energy costs and support the competitiveness of UK companies as we pursue our climate change targets in the most cost effective way.

Today Minister of State for Climate Change and Industry Nick Hurd attended the [Rushlight Awards](#) where he announced funding for a series of energy innovation projects. The funding boost of £28 million will be invested in smart systems, industrial energy reduction and offshore wind demonstrating our commitment to building a low carbon, low cost future. This forms part of the government's commitment to double support for energy innovation, up to £400 million per year in 2021.

More details of the government's Energy Innovation Programme and funding are available from the [GOV.UK Energy Innovation page](#).

This financial support follows on the government's vision to ensure the UK continues to be the global leader in science and research. The [Industrial Strategy green paper](#) identifies that we need to do more to commercialise the world-class ideas and discoveries made in Britain, and put the UK and British companies at the forefront of innovation.

Minister for Climate Change and Industry Nick Hurd said:

Innovation in energy will play an important role to shape our low carbon future to rebuild an outdated energy system. That's why we've increased our financial support, helping to create jobs and opportunities for people across the UK.

Our Industrial Strategy green paper seeks views on how we can support these emerging technologies, ensuring we drive growth and develop international partnerships across our world leading research, science and innovation sector.

Under the new investment, up to £9 million will be spent on a competition to reduce the cost of energy storage, including electricity, thermal, and power-to-gas storage and up to £600,000 for feasibility studies for projects that can store energy on a large scale, for use when it's needed.

Up to £7.6 million will be available for advancing energy demand side response technologies that can help both private and public sector organisations reduce energy use in peak times.

To reduce the cost of energy for industry, the government will invest around £9 million in a competition for 'industrial energy efficiency accelerator'.

The competition would help to find new ways of improving the energy efficiency of UK industry, helping to develop industry-specific options for a low carbon future.

Today's announcement reaffirms our financial support to the sector after the investment of £2 billion a year by 2020-21 in research and development and £23 billion in high value investment through National Productivity Investment Fund was introduced at the Autumn Statement. The funds will address our key economic challenge of raising business productivity, helping to support business and research collaborations to explore opportunities to transform industries.

Press release: Oil and gas regulators to host public drop-in at Wakefield

From:

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Come and find out how agencies work together to regulate drilling activities

A group of public agencies is hosting a drop-in event in Wakefield to explain how they work together to regulate the onshore oil and gas industry and protect communities and the environment.

The Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive, Oil and Gas Authority, and Public Health England are hosting the event in the Kingswood Suite at Wakefield Town Hall, Wood Street, Wakefield, on Tuesday 7 February.

These agencies work together to assess the impacts of the oil and gas industry, to oversee industry operations, and to ensure that any exploration and development, including fracking, is done in a way that does not put people or the environment at risk of harm.

The drop-in session is one of a series of events that offer local residents, businesses and other interested parties in West Yorkshire an opportunity to find out about agencies' roles and to ask questions and discuss any issues or concerns they have about onshore oil and gas development ahead of any future applications to develop operations in the area.

Everyone is welcome to attend at any time between 2pm and 7pm.

Speech: Baroness Shields closing speech at the Global Counter Terrorism Forum

On behalf of the GCTF co-chairs of the working group on countering violent extremism, I would like to thank the Swiss government and the UAE for making this experts meeting possible.

In particular I'd like to thank the Swiss government for their leadership and industry representatives for their constructive engagement and recognition of the benefits of GCTF and other such forums in providing a multi-national, multi-stakeholder platform for these important discussions.

And finally, my thanks goes to ISD, D-CAF and the GCTF administrative unit for organising the event and all participants for their insightful and thoughtful contributions.

Just over the last 3 days, whilst we have been at this conference, Daesh has continued its attempt to poison the minds of the young and vulnerable. On Monday the group produced a cartoon presented as a bedtime story for children, in which viewers are urged to join the group and fight the supposed tyranny of the West.

They followed this by producing a video showing child soldiers beheading and shooting to death Kurdish captives in Syria. Aside from the moral depravity these 2 examples evidence, they also illustrate the breadth and many nuances of the Daesh proposition.

Of course we cannot focus on Daesh in isolation. Just last night al-Qa'ida released perhaps the most polished version of their English-language magazine al-Risalah, which celebrated the cowardly murder of Russian Ambassador Andrei Karlov and provided instructions for using the TOR browser to discreetly access terrorist content online.

Since Monday, Jabhat Fateh al-Sham published a video of a suicide operation involving 15 terrorists in Homs. The Afghan Taliban claimed to have wounded 70 people in a twin suicide bombing in Kabul. And 2 terrorist groups released proof-of-life videos featuring hostages from Australia and Switzerland, their captors demanding ransoms for their release.

At the outset of this conference, I challenged us collectively to set our ambitions higher to respond to the evolving global threat of terrorist and violent extremist abuse of the internet. The reality, as these examples demonstrate, is that terrorism is destroying lives across the world every day.

As I previously acknowledged, a lot of good work has already been undertaken by civil society, governments and industry but we all recognise the need to amplify the pace, scale and reach of our efforts to address the immediacy of the challenge we face.

We cannot be complacent. We must continue this dialogue to ensure our collective efforts have a true impact in tackling such heinous content. I am therefore encouraged to hear the innovative ideas and good practice that has been discussed at this forum.

It is clear to me that we have real will and expertise in this room to make a difference and ensure people around the world are not exposed to the violent narratives terrorists seek to spread online.

In setting our ambitions high, it is vital to acknowledge the fundamental importance of partnership working and of continuous innovation.

As I set out previously, this is not a threat that can be tackled by one nation, company or group in isolation and this forum has provided an opportunity to bring together our knowledge, expertise and capabilities to improve our response.

This is an unrelenting challenge and we must continue to make progress. In light of this, I would like us all to consider the following emerging themes from this conference.

First, the need to develop and maintain effective partnerships across sectors to scale existing and new efforts, by drawing on unique capabilities of each.

Second, the importance of being agile and innovative, sharing best practice and data driven research and analysis to act as the foundation for effective policy making and counter-narrative communications.

And third, alongside developing national capacity, to continue engagement at international forums such as the GCTF to ensure we collectively amplify our response to this global threat.

Public private partnerships

So to my first point. A lot of the discussion at this forum has rightly centred on the value of effective public private partnerships. Collaboration between and across a wide range of actors is key to ensuring a holistic approach that draws on the best we all have to offer.

I welcome innovative thinking in casting the net wider on who we bring into our partnerships including collaborating with advertising agencies and other sectors like the cyber security industry to tackle this ever evolving threat from different perspectives.

As such I am encouraged by the model supported by D-CAF, for the International Code of Conduct Association, to deal with private security companies and the potential to apply that approach to this challenge.

Like the WeProtect model the UK set up to tackle online child sexual exploitation, we need to show that a global partnership can also make a significant impact on tackling terrorist and extremist communications online.

These past 3 days have shown us that in terms of motivations and incentives, there is broad alignment between civil society, public and private sectors. We all want the same outcomes.

But what is needed is greater understanding of each other's positions and how best to approach collaboration. Going forward we need to consider how we can make more of existing partnerships to scale our response, working towards understanding the impact of promising existing initiatives. We also need to continue to build new partnerships, exploring innovative ways to tackle the threat. Following this conference I hope we can continue our dialogue on maximising effectiveness through partnership and learning from best practice globally.

Innovation, sharing best practice, research and analysis

To my second point, over the past few days it is clear that many of you have developed and are keen to share innovative ideas on tackling terrorist and violent extremist use of the internet. This is very encouraging.

The threat we face is unrelenting and constantly evolving. The terrorists and violent extremists do not rest – they are constantly innovating and adapting their methods to stay one step ahead. Together we must outmatch their efforts.

I am pleased that right here in this room we have the expertise and commitment to drive this innovating thinking in your respective sectors.

For civil society groups, this innovation could focus on the different mediums of messaging, be it counter, alternative or subtle messaging delivered through human-centric entertainment. For industry, this could mean innovative technical solutions including detecting and removing harmful content as soon as it is released. And for governments this means developing innovative policies and partnerships to tackle terrorist propaganda online to safeguard their citizens.

All of this needs to be underpinned by cutting edge research and analysis and innovative communications.

Whether that be the entertaining cartoons developed and presented here by Big Bad Boo, the counter narratives based on the lives of female defectors as promoted by Hedayah or the data driven approach to peacebuilding developed by PeaceTech Labs.

In the UK we have conducted research into the role that different channels play in the Daesh's propaganda ecosystem online which can be grouped into 3 broad categories:

- what we refer to as beacons, like Twitter and Telegram, are used to coordinate and disseminate propaganda to the wider public

- aggregators, like file hosting or pasting sites, WordPress and social networks like Facebook and Google+ fulfil the function of hosting catalogues of vile propaganda
- content stores, like YouTube, archive.org or Google Drive, are sites on which propaganda can be stored

Daesh are acutely aware of the different roles that each platform plays in the online propaganda ecosystem. And they are adept at maximising their exploitation of this ecosystem.

Our response needs to be mindful of this and we need to continue conducting ground breaking research and analysis to inform our response.

International forums and national capacity building

Moving to my final point, alongside building national capacity this conference has once again demonstrated the importance of international fora, like the UN PVE, the GCTF and the Global Coalition Strat Comms Cell. The internet has no borders and it is clear that international engagement is imperative in ensuring a holistic response to the online terrorist threat.

We need to ensure that our joint efforts complement each other, that international standards and conventions that we all hold dear including freedom of expression and human rights are upheld. And that that our global strategic discussions at forums like the GCTF drives effective local action.

I am deeply encouraged that this conference has led to calls for further discussions on specific topics and hope this will lead to further tangible, collaborative initiatives.

Conclusion

I'd like to conclude by returning to the threat we face once more. Terrorist groups rely on closed communities of supporters on social networks and messaging applications to increase support for their cause. These online echo chambers serve to normalise and more deeply entrench, dangerous extremist views, which, as we've seen, can have horrific consequences.

By working more closely with industry and community partners, we can loosen the stranglehold that terrorist radicalisers have on vulnerable people in these echo chambers, removing this vile terrorist propaganda and promoting positive alternatives.

It is clear to me that through the GCTF and other collaborative international fora, we can scale efforts to tackle terrorist and extremist abuse of the internet in all its forms. As you have rightly acknowledged, whilst Daesh are the current focus, there is a need to ensure we don't lose sight of other growing threats, like far-right extremism and the vicious cycle of islamophobia.

It is great to see the passion and appetite for collaboration, allowing each of us to benefit from the breadth of knowledge and expertise of all of the

participants.

Specifically, I note the following key outcomes and points from the conference:

Firstly, the need to develop harmonised approaches across countries to understand and evaluate impact. Here I think governments have a role to play in setting objectives, building consensus on theories of change, and ensuring that strategic gaps are met.

Secondly, the need to build a comprehensive framework for communications beyond narrow counter speech efforts online. This could including offline engagement, educational initiatives and work across different forms of media.

I also note the appeal from yesterday's panel members for governments to involve youth in understanding the appeal of these narratives in policy-making and counter narrative response. This is valuable idea to gain better insight and understanding and something the UK government will continue to explore.

Finally, yesterday, discussions ended with you all agreeing that working towards a single, shared and clearly defined core objective, underpinned by a common theory of change is crucial. And I think the GCTF is an excellent forum to drive this through.

As co-chair of the GCTF working group on countering violent extremism, the UK is keen to continue this vital discussion and hear from all of you on how we best shape this initiative going forward.

We must ensure that the internet – which was built to create a more closely connected world and provide greater access to knowledge and information continues to empower people to shape their own futures.

We must ensure that the Internet does not become a battle ground where extreme views, hatred, division and intolerance are amplified and the vulnerable, victimised.

Collectively, through our shared expertise and drive we can innovate to reclaim the internet from the terrorists and violent extremists that seek to divide us.

Thank you.