

## News story: Japanese nuclear specialists will learn from UK expertise

Representatives from the Japan Atomic Energy Authority (JAEA) visited Dounreay and Sellafield to learn more about the nuclear decommissioning and hazard reduction programmes, and to find out if the UK's nuclear innovation could be used at sites in Japan.

Dounreay – in Caithness, Scotland – is the former centre of fast reactor research and development, and is one of the UK's most complex nuclear decommissioning projects.

Sellafield, which has been at the forefront of the UK's nuclear industry for several decades, is now making significant progress in cleaning up the legacy from the earliest days of nuclear.

Dr Adrian Simper, the NDA's Strategy and Technology Director, said:

These visits are an important part of the work being done by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), its subsidiary International Nuclear Services, and the Department for International Trade to highlight the UK's nuclear decommissioning expertise to overseas customers.

The work being done on the NDA sites is pioneering the way nuclear facilities are decommissioned all over the world and showcases the unique expertise that is on offer within the UK's nuclear supply chain.

Cockermouth-based Createc has recently won a Queen's Award for Enterprise for its work on nuclear decommissioning projects in Japan and the United States. Createc produced radiation mapping equipment, developed for use at Sellafield, which has gone on to be used in the damaged Fukushima reactor.

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## Speech: Making UN peacekeeping more effective and efficient

Thank you Madame President,

And thank you for this opportunity for a candid and constructive discussion with our Force Commanders who I thank for their briefings so far and I put on notice that I am going to ask lots of questions to and hope to hear from later. Thank you also to Under-Secretary-General Lacroix for everything you have had to say and for your leadership on these issues. I do think it is very important for our Force Commanders that you are able to be here with the Security Council and able to speak truth to us and to be as clear as you need to be with all of us here, so please be candid.

Before I go into some of those questions though, I would like to take colleagues back; some of us were on the Security Council visit to Mali last November where we had the great honour of participating in the dedication of a memorial to all who had lost their lives serving in MINUSMA. And I think it's important that we take the time and the moment to pay tribute to all those peacekeepers that have given their lives in service of the United Nations, and to all the brave women and men that serve now in support of the UN's peace operations. I would like to offer the United Kingdom's thanks for their service and for the service and leadership of our Force Commanders here today.

Peacekeeping is one of this organisation's greatest achievements. It is an integral part of what our peoples around the world think of when they think of the United Nations and we celebrate this year, the 70th anniversary of United Nations peacekeeping. And as we strive for reform in the wider UN system, so we must work to make UN peacekeeping more effective and efficient, through better mission planning, through more pledges of troops and capabilities, and stronger mission performance.

We therefore welcome both the report on improving the safety and security of peacekeepers by General dos Santos Cruz and the UN's Action Plan and the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative that has flown from that. We see three key priorities:

Firstly, that this Council should take a longer-term view of conflicts and set more strategic and sequenced mandates.

Secondly, that peacekeeping should be better coordinated with other UN activities such as peacebuilding and development.

And thirdly, improved peacekeeping performance, including accountability where performance is not at the right standard.

My first question to our Commanders is: how is the Action plan being implemented in your missions? General Deconinck mentioned the importance of intelligence in peacekeeping, in situational awareness, sending our peacekeepers out with knowledge of what is going on around them. What improvements have been made in the use of peacekeeping intelligence and how can we in New York further support those efforts?

And then in the context of efforts to further improve the performance of peacekeepers, I know the Secretariat has been tasked to develop an integrated performance policy framework. My question would be whether the Force

Commanders have a view on what the performance framework should contain? How do we incentivise better performance in missions?

Specific questions on some of the missions: On UNAMID, thank you very much for what you had to say about the reconfiguration work. I would just ask what you think, General, the next steps should be in the mission's reconfiguration. In particular, whether any challenges are being faced alongside the mandate to protect civilians.

On MINUSMA, again I thought that that was a very helpful intervention. A question I would have is: we know of course MINUSMA is working in the same space as the G5 Sahel Joint Taskforce, I'd just like to know how well the military actors are joining up to ensure they contribute in their defined ways to the common objective, and how the link with development humanitarian is going? Is there a coordinated plan that brings together the different military actors and the different development actors behind them to make the most of all of the tools we have at our disposal in Mali?

And then finally to the General commanding UNMISS, I want to say how we talked about this yesterday and it should be in the Council, how impressed we have been by some of the swift and decisive action taken recently in response to cases of sexual exploitation and abuse. And I just wonder – this is obviously a big problem still in different missions – whether you could give some examples of the best practice you've used in South Sudan that might help other missions to learn and to be able to respond effectively if it happens to them.

Let me finish there in the spirit of interactiveness and reiterate my sincere gratitude to all of those serving in blue for the good of all of us.

Thank you.

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## **News story: Digital rail revolution will reduce overcrowding and cut delays**

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling and Network Rail Chief Executive Mark Carne will today (10 May 2018) launch Network Rail's Digital Railway Strategy and commit to ensuring all new trains and signalling are digital or digital ready from 2019. They will also set out that they want to see digital rail technology benefiting passengers across the network over the next decade.

New digital rail technology will:

- safely allow more trains to run per hour by running trains closer

together

- allow more frequent services and more seats
- cut delays by allowing trains to get moving more rapidly after disruption
- enable vastly improved mobile and wi-fi connectivity, so that passengers can make the most of their travel time and communities close to the railway can connect more easily

#### [Video about digital rail improvements](#)

The technology will be fully operational from next year on the Thameslink service in central London, which will see 24 trains pass through every hour. The Digital Railway Strategy is being launched in York, on the Transpennine route, which Chris Grayling will say he wants to be the country's first digitally controlled intercity railway.

Chris Grayling, Transport Secretary, said:

We are investing in the biggest modernisation of our railway since Victorian times to deliver what passengers want to see – faster, more reliable and more comfortable journeys.

Passenger numbers have doubled in recent years – which means we need to invest in new technology to help deliver the reliable and frequent trains that passengers want.

Investing in a railway fit for the twenty-first century will help the UK become a world leader in rail technology, boosting exports and skills. As we celebrate the [Year of Engineering](#), this is a chance to show young people how digital innovation is opening doors to careers that will shape the future of travel.

Digital rail technology will ensure the best use is made of the almost £48 billion being invested in maintenance, modernisation and renewal on the rail network between 2019 and 2024, which includes new and replacement signalling. The government has also earmarked £450 million specifically for digital railway schemes.

Mark Carne, chief executive, said:

Not since the railway transformed from steam to diesel in the 1960s has a technological breakthrough held such promise to vastly improve our railway for the benefit of the millions of people and businesses who rely on it every day.

The age of a digital railway has today moved from the drawing board and into reality as we reveal a blueprint that will improve the lives of millions of passengers and freight users across the country. Today's commitment is to adopt and roll-out new digital technology, for both trains and track, that will deliver faster

more frequent services for passengers and businesses alike, giving our economy a massive boost.

Digital signalling will mean drivers are provided with real-time information about the network and the location of other trains. They will no longer have to rely on signals by the side of tracks, which will mean fewer train services held up, reducing stop-starting. And in the event of disruption, the digital railway will advise signallers of the best option to get services back to normal and help the network recover more quickly.

The roll-out of digital signalling on the UK network is already underway. The technology is assisting drivers as part of the [Thameslink Programme upgrades](#) and the rail industry will fit 200 trains with digital signalling technology by the end of 2018. Crossrail will use in-cab signalling to deliver more trains and seats east-west through London.

The government has also earmarked £5 million for Network Rail to develop proposals for embedding digital technology between Manchester and York, as part of the £3 billion upgrade of that route starting next year.

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## **[News story: Islay Trader report published](#)**

The MAIB report on the grounding of Islay Trader off Margate while on passage from Murphy's Wharf, Greenwich to Antwerp, Belgium on 8 October 2017, is now published.

The vessel sustained plate indentation and frame distortion but there were no injuries and no pollution.

The report contains details of what happened, actions taken and recommendations, [read more](#).

### **Press enquiries**

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

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# Press release: Government calls on technology firms to help tackle the UK's biggest challenges

Today Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, will announce the first round of competitions for tech specialists to tackle social challenges at the government's flagship digital conference, Sprint 18.

The competitions will be delivered using the £20m GovTech fund launched by the Prime Minister in November 2017.

Contributing to each of the government's [Grand Challenges](#) – the data economy; clean growth; healthy ageing and the future of mobility – the competition is designed to incentivise Britain's tech firms to come up with innovative solutions to improve public services.

The Government Digital Service is challenging tech experts to find solutions for specific issues including tackling loneliness and how to reduce plastic waste.

The first of these competitions opens on Monday 14 May and runs for six weeks, with the remaining competitions being launched in subsequent months.

Tech firms bidding to the fund will have free rein to create truly innovative fixes. Winning companies will be awarded up to £50,000 to develop their ideas.

The companies providing the best potential solutions will then be awarded research and development contracts of up to £500,000 to build prototypes. These solutions will then be available to the public sector to purchase.

Minister for Implementation, Oliver Dowden, in the Cabinet Office said:

Our modern Industrial Strategy will cement Britain's position as a world-leader in digital innovation and this Government is committed to providing more opportunities for tech businesses – including small firms – to access public procurement contracts. The GovTech fund encourages firms to find innovative ways to fix the big social problems we all face – loneliness, plastic pollution and national security.

Through emerging technologies, this fund will elevate British companies onto a global market while helping to deliver outstanding public services and improving lives for people.

The first GovTech competition opens on Monday 14 May for six weeks – see more here. It will be overseen by a dedicated GovTech team which will operate at

the heart of Government and oversee the £20 million fund.

The GovTech assessment panel is made up of representatives from Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), The Government Digital Service (GDS), Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), HM Treasury, the Innovate UK (the UK's innovation agency), and the devolved Northern Ireland administration.

Sprint 18 will bring together digital and technology leaders to hear about the work taking place across the public sector to make government work better through the themes of Transformation, Collaboration and Innovation. Discussions will include how the UK is using its status as a world leader in digital government to help other countries, through the recently announced Global Digital Marketplace, and how departments are using Government as a Platform, which uses digital services to make government work better for citizens.

The challenges, which will all be launched in coming months, are:

Identifying terrorist still imagery (Home Office). Home Office research shows that more than two-thirds of terrorist propaganda disseminated online is still imagery. This project will support both Government analysis of, and broader efforts to remove, this harmful material.

Tracking waste through the waste chain, submitted by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). A new technological approach could help record, check and track waste, helping boost productivity, reduce costs, and protect both human health and the environment.

Tackling loneliness and rural isolation, submitted by Monmouthshire Council. The government recognises that rural transport is vital to local communities, and businesses. A technological solution, exploiting vehicles with spare capacity could support rural economies.

Cutting traffic congestion, submitted by Department for Transport (DfT). Greater collection and new analysis of data could help target interventions to cut congestion.

Local authorities have large numbers of council vehicles crossing their areas every day. If they can be equipped with innovative data capture systems, they could understand potholes, litter, recycling, parking, air quality and more in real-time, every day, for no added cost. This could mean reduced service delivery costs and better local services.