

## [News story: CMA CGM Vasco de Gama report published](#)

MAIB's report on the grounding of the ultra-large container vessel CMA CGM Vasco de Gama on the western side of the Thorn Channel whilst approaching the Port of Southampton on 22 August 2016, is now published.

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

### **Press enquiries**

Press enquiries during office hours 01932 440015

Press enquiries out of hours 020 7944 4292

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## [News story: UK Government ministers host Poppyscotland launch](#)

The Scotland Office hosted the launch of this year's appeal, with ministers encouraging everyone to use their old 'round pounds' to purchase their poppy.

Although the deadline for the old 'round pound' coin passed on 15 October, they can still be banked or donated to charity, with Poppyscotland happily accepting donations.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell and UK Minister for Scotland Lord Duncan welcomed representatives of Poppyscotland and guests to Dover House this evening [25 October], including Harriett Baldwin MP and Tobias Elwood MP from the Ministry of Defence, to show their support for Scotland's Armed Forces community.

Speaking before the event, Lord Duncan said:

It is a pleasure to launch this year's Poppyscotland campaign in Dover House, as we remember all those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

I visited the Lady Haig Poppy Factory and met the ex-servicemen who

create the more than five million poppies every year and saw first-hand the support Poppyscotland provides for our veterans.

It is important to remember also that Poppyscotland will still be accepting your old pound coins, so dig down the back of the sofa, check your loose change and buy a poppy to show your support for our armed forces.

During his visit to the Lady Haig's Poppy Factory, Lord Duncan learnt how to put together the distinctive four-leaf crimped poppies.

[Lady Haig's Poppy Factory Visit – October 2017](#)

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## **Press release: First Secretary Meets the Elders to Discuss Global Issues**

Today Damian Green, First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office, met with the Elders to discuss a range of global issues that the UK is helping to tackle.

The Former President of Ireland, Mary Robinson; former president of Mexico, Ernesto Zedillo; and the former Algerian Foreign Minister and UN Special Representative for Syria, Lakhdar Brahimi, met the First Secretary in his offices on Whitehall.

Damian Green, First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office said:

It was a pleasure and an honour to meet the Elders and I am glad that we could have a constructive meeting. We discussed issues including Syria, modern slavery, refugees, climate change and the Northern Irish border after Brexit.

I reiterated the importance the UK places on tackling external threats to our environment and global security, and upholding the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. I also restated the Government's commitment to avoiding a 'hard border' between Ireland and Northern Ireland and protecting the Common Travel Area.

The UK is a global nation, never more so than now, and the Government firmly believes Britain should play an active, leading role in the world. I look forward to continuing this dialogue with the Elders and other international groups in the months and years ahead.

Mary Robinson, Former President of Ireland and lead for the delegation said:

We have held positive discussions today with the First Secretary of State on a range of global issues from the war in Syria and tensions over North Korea, to the Iran nuclear agreement, refugees and migration and climate change. As one of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, the United Kingdom has a special responsibility to play in this forum and beyond to promote peace, diplomacy and the indispensability of multilateral institutions in solving global problems.

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## [News story: UK hosts international nuclear disarmament verification exercise](#)

Experts from Norway, Sweden and the United States travelled to join UK experts from the Atomic Weapons Establishment at RAF Honington, Suffolk where the exercise, named 'Letterpress', took place.

The first of its kind, the exercise began to address the greatest technical obstruction to nuclear disarmament – the absence of an established or agreed process of checking the dismantlement of a nuclear weapon. Letterpress is part of an ongoing arms control research collaboration. In a concluding event yesterday personnel simulated the very early stages of dismantling a mock-up nuclear weapon and there were a range of talks from international experts the subject.

Exercise Letterpress included a simulation of of the early stages of dismantling a mock-up nuclear weapon.

**Speaking on the exercise yesterday, James Franklin, Head of Nuclear Policy for the UK Ministry of Defence said:**

International exercises of this scale are hugely important to ensure the possibility of a world without nuclear weapons. This exercise was part of our commitment made at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Preparatory Committee 2017 and makes a tangible contribution to the UK's commitment to Article VI of the treaty itself which remains the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation framework. I'm proud the that UK remains a responsible nuclear weapons state, exercises like this and the reduction of our nuclear forces by over half since the Cold War

continue to reinforce this

Disarmament verification constitutes a central part of Norway's non-proliferation and disarmament work. We must focus on effective and concrete steps to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, in accordance with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Exercise Letterpress is a core building block of our common efforts and exemplifies a fact-based approach to disarmament that we strongly believe in. International cooperation of this kind is essential in developing trust and confidence between nuclear and non-nuclear weapons states. Norway's long-term cooperation with the UK on disarmament verification -the UKNI – has greatly improved our understanding of the technical and security related challenges associated with nuclear disarmament.

Signing in 1968, the UK has been a long-term member of the Treaty on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which has a key aim of achieving the long term goal of nuclear disarmament. Exercises like Letterpress are key to fulfilling our commitment to the Treaty.

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## [Press release: Change of Her Majesty's Consul General in New York](#)

Antony Phillipson has been appointed Her Majesty's Consul General in New York and Director-General of International Trade North America. Antony will take up his appointment in mid-November 2017.

Sir Kim Darroch, Her Majesty's Ambassador to the United States said:

I am delighted to announce Antony Phillipson's appointment as Her Majesty's Consul General in New York. Antony served with me in No 10 Downing Street in the mid-2000s, and later as British High Commissioner to Singapore. Moreover, earlier in his career, he spent four years in Washington as our Counsellor on global economic policy. He is, in short, outstandingly well-equipped to serve Her Majesty's Government in one of the United States' most vibrant and dynamic regions and strengthen a vitally important economic and trade partnership with the US. I look forward eagerly to his arrival.

Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade said:

Antony has an extensive background in trade promotion and trade policy, and will bring his unique experience and international insight to the role leading DIT in North America. I look forward to working closely with Antony in his role to further trade and investment ties between the UK and the USA and Canada.

As Consul General, Antony will lead the Government's work promoting UK economic, commercial, political and consular interests in New York and the surrounding area. As Head of International Trade in North America, Antony will lead trade and investment promotion and trade policy throughout the North American region.

Antony takes up his position at an important time, with the total UK-US trade in goods and services worth more than \$200 billion annually supporting more than a million jobs on each side of the pond. The US and UK are each other's largest foreign direct investors and trading partners.

Previously, Antony Phillipson was Director of Trade and Partnerships in the Department for Exiting the European Union. He has held a number of other posts in Her Majesty's Government since joining the Civil Service in 1993, including Counsellor in the Embassy in Washington, the Prime Minister's Private Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Head of the FCO Iran Coordination Group and High Commissioner to Singapore.

Antony has a degree in Modern History from the University of Oxford. He is married to Julie and they have three sons.