Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to Yemen: Richard Oppenheim

Press release

Mr Richard Oppenheim has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Yemen in succession to Mr Michael Aron. Mr Oppenheim will take up his appointment in July 2021.

Curriculum vitae

Full name: Richard Oppenheim

Dates	Role
2018 to present	Riyadh, Deputy Head of Mission
2017 to 2018	Cabinet Office, Deputy Director and Commonwealth Envoy, Commonwealth Summit Unit
2017	FCO, Prosperity Fund Transition Co-ordinator, Economic Diplomacy Directorate
2015 to 2017	Tokyo, Counsellor – Political (Security/External)
2011 to 2015	Tokyo, First Secretary – Climate Change and Energy
2010	Full-time Language Training (Japanese)
2007 to 2009	Baghdad, First Secretary and Head of Political Section
2005 to 2007	Muscat, Second Secretary – Political, Press and Public Affairs; Baghdad Temporary duty (one month) in 2007 as Head of Crisis Management Team; Basra Temporary duty (one month) 2006 as Head of Chancery
2004 to 2005	Full-time Language Training (Arabic)
2003	New York, Committee Support Office, UK Permanent Mission to the UN
2002 to 2003	FCO, Desk Officer, EU Enlargement/Turkey/Cyprus, Europe Directorate (External)

Newsdesk

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CMA to investigate NVIDIA's takeover of Arm

This is an early opportunity for interested third parties to comment on the impact that the takeover could have on competition in the UK, in advance of the Competition and Market Authority's (CMA) formal investigation starting later this year.

US-based chip designer and producer NVIDIA Corporation (NVIDIA) plans to purchase the Intellectual Property Group business of UK-based Arm Limited (Arm) in a deal worth $40 billion. Arm develops and licenses intellectual property (IP) and software tools for chip designs. The products and services supplied by the companies support a wide range of applications used by businesses and consumers across the UK, including desktop computers and mobile devices, game consoles and vehicle computer systems.

The CMA will look at the deal's possible effect on competition in the UK. The CMA is likely to consider whether, following the takeover, Arm has an incentive to withdraw, raise prices or reduce the quality of its IP licensing services to NVIDIA's rivals.

Andrea Coscelli, chief executive of the CMA, said:

"The chip technology industry is worth billions and critical to many of the products that we use most in our everyday lives. We will work closely with other competition authorities around the world to carefully consider the impact of the deal and ensure that it doesn't ultimately result in consumers facing more expensive or lower quality products."

The CMA's remit, by law, is to assess the potential impact of a merger on competition. It cannot consider other potential effects that a merger might have, for example on employment or industrial strategy. Any national security concerns would be a matter for the UK Government, which can issue a public interest intervention notice, if appropriate.

The CMA is now inviting views on the impact of the deal on competition to assist with its ongoing assessment of the merger. Further opportunities to

submit views will be provided once the CMA begins its formal Phase 1 investigation in due course.

Information relating to the CMA's investigation is available on the NVIDIA/Arm merger inquiry case page.

Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons on COVID-19 regulations: 6 January 2021

Thank you very much Mr Speaker and can I share your gratitude to the House of Commons staff for all their efforts, their hard work to allow us to meet today in the way that we are.

And before I begin my statement, I know the thoughts of the whole House are with the Hon Member for Cardiff Central who is currently in hospital with Covid, and we wish her a full and speedy recovery.

With permission, I shall make a statement about the measures we are taking to defeat this new variant of Covid-19,

protecting our NHS whilst it carries out the vaccinations that will finally free us from this wretched virus.

And Mr Speaker, there is a fundamental difference between the regulations before the House today,

and the position we have faced at any previous stage,

because now we have the vaccines that are the means of our escape

and we will use every available second of the lockdown to place this invisible shield around the elderly and the vulnerable.

Already – with Pfizer and Oxford/AstraZeneca combined –

we have immunised over 1.1 million people in England

and over 1.3 million in the UK.

Our NHS is following the plan drawn up by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation

which is aimed at saving the most lives in the fastest possible time.

And given that the average age of Covid fatalities is over 80,

it is significant that we have already vaccinated more than 650,000 people in this age group,

meaning that within 2 to 3 weeks,

almost 1 in 4 of one of the most vulnerable groups will all have a significant degree of immunity.

By February 15th the NHS is committed to offering a vaccination to everyone in the top four priority groups

including older care home residents and staff

everyone over 70

all frontline NHS and care staff

and all those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

And in working towards that target there are already almost 1,000 vaccination centres across the country

including 595 GP-led sites with a further 180 opening later this week

and 107 hospital sites – with another 100 later this week

Next week we will also have seven vaccination centres opening in places such as sports stadia and exhibition centres.

Pharmacies are already working with GPs to deliver the vaccine in many areas of the country

and I am grateful to Brigadier Prosser who is leading the efforts of our armed forces in supporting this vaccine rollout.

We have already vaccinated more people in this country than in the rest of Europe combined

and we will give the House the maximum possible transparency about our acceleration of this effort

publishing daily updates online from Monday

so that jab by jab

Hon Members can scrutinise the progress being made every single day.

Yet as we take this giant leap towards finally overcoming this virus and reclaiming our lives,

we have to contend with the new variant

which is between 50 and 70 per cent more contagious.

The old variant, which the House agreed last month, the tiers agreed by this House last month was working with the old variant.

But, alas, this mutation

spreading with frightening ease and speed in spite of the sterling work of the British public –

has led to more cases than we have ever seen before,

alas numbers that cannot be explained away by the meteoric rise in testing.

When the Office for National Statistics reports that more than 2 per cent of the population is now infected,

and when the number of patients in hospitals in England is now 40 per cent higher than the first peak in April,

it is inescapable that the facts are changing

and we must change our response.

And so we now have no choice but to return to a national lockdown in England

with similar measures being adopted by the Devolved Administrations –

so we can control this new variant until we can take the most likely victims out of its path with vaccines.

My Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Health will open the debate on the full regulations shortly,

but the key point I am afraid is that we are once again instructing everyone to stay at home, everyone to stay at home

leaving only for limited reasons permitted by law,

such as to shop for essentials,

to work if people absolutely cannot work from home,

to exercise,

to seek medical assistance such as getting a Covid test,

or to escape injury or harm, including domestic abuse.

We are advising the clinically extremely vulnerable to begin shielding again.

And because we must do everything possible to stop the spread of the disease

we have asked schools and colleges to close their doors to all except vulnerable children and those of critical workers.

Mr Speaker, I don’t think the House will be in any doubt about our

determination, my determination to keep schools open,

especially primary schools –

open for as long as possible.

Because all the evidence shows that school is the best place for our children.

And indeed all the evidence shows that schools are safe, and that the risk posed to children by Coronavirus is vanishingly small.

For most children the most dangerous part of going to school, even in the midst of this global pandemic, remains I'm afraid crossing the road in order to get there.

But the data showed, and our scientific advisers agreed, that our efforts to contain the spread of this new variant would not be sufficient if schools continued to act as a potential vector for spreading the virus between households.

Mr Speaker, I know the whole House will join me in paying tribute to all the teachers, all the pupils and parents who are now making the rapid move to remote learning,

and we will do everything possible to support that process,

building on the 560,000 laptops and tablets provided last year

with over 50,000 delivered to schools on Monday

and more than 100,000 being delivered in total during the first week of term.

We have partnered with some of the UK's leading mobile operators to provide free mobile data to disadvantaged families to support access to education resources.

And I am very grateful to EE, Three, Tesco Mobile, Smarty, Sky Mobile, Virgin Mobile and Vodafone for supporting this offer.

Oak National Academy will continue to provide video lessons

and it's very good news that the BBC is launching the biggest education programme in its history, with both primary and secondary school programmes across its platforms.

We recognise it will not be possible or fair for all exams to go ahead this Summer as normal. And the Education Secretary will be making a statement shortly.

Mr Speaker, I know many people will ask whether the decision on schools could have been reached sooner,

and the answer is that we have been doing everything in our power to keep

them open

because children’s education is too vital, and their futures too precious, to be disrupted

until every other avenue, every other option had been closed off

and every other course of action had been taken.

That is why schools were the very last thing to close, as I have long promised they would be.

And when we begin to move out of lockdown I promise they will be the very first things to reopen.

That moment may come after the February half-term, although we should remain extremely cautious about the timetable ahead.

And as was the case last spring, our emergence from the lockdown cocoon will be not a big bang but a gradual unwrapping.

That is why the legislation this House will vote on later today runs until 31 March.

Not because we expect the full national lockdown to continue until then, but to allow a steady, controlled and evidence-led move down through the tiers on a regional basis

carefully brick-by-brick as it were breaking free of our confinement but without risking the hard-won gains that protections have given us.

The restrictions will be kept under continuous review,

with a statutory requirement to review every two weeks

and a legal obligation to remove them if they are no longer deemed necessary to limit the transmission of the virus.

And for as long as restrictions are in place we will continue to support everyone affected by them

from the continued provision of free school meals

to the £4.6 billion of additional assistance for our retail, hospitality and leisure sectors announced by my Rt Hon Friend the Chancellor yesterday.

Mr Speaker, we are in a tough final stretch

made only tougher by the new variant –

but this country will come together

and the miracle of scientific endeavour, much of it right here in the UK, has given us not only the sight of the finish line but a clear route to get

there.

After the marathon of last year we are indeed now in a sprint, a race to vaccinate the vulnerable faster than the virus can reach them.

Every needle in every arm makes a difference,

As I say we are already vaccinating faster than any comparable country and that rate I hope will only increase.

But if we're going to win this race for our population we have to give our army of vaccinators the biggest head start we possibly can.

And that is why to do that we must once again stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives.

And I commend this statement to the House.

£550m F-35 missile contract signed

Known as SPEAR3, the next-generation missile can travel long distances at high-subsonic speed and over the next decade will become the F-35's primary air-to-ground weapon.

At 1.8 metres long, the missile system has a range of more than 140-kilometres and, powered by a turbojet engine, can operate across land and sea, day or night, to overpower enemy air defence systems, while the pilot and aircraft remains a safe distance away.

Its ability to attack moving targets will enhance the UK's future combat air capability and provide immense lethal capability to the Queen Elizabeth class carrier strike group.

Defence Minister Jeremy Quin said:

"The development of this next-generation missile will allow us to protect our personnel and assets on the ground, from thousands of metres in the sky above."

"Our commitment to this system will secure hundreds of highly skilled jobs across the UK and showcase British technology and weapon expertise on the world stage."

Following a successful development phase, the new seven-year demonstration and manufacture contract with MBDA will support more than 700 UK jobs, including the creation of 190 highly skilled technology jobs in system design, guidance control and navigation and software engineering.

At the peak of the contract, 570 people will work on various aspects of the system's development in Bristol, Stevenage and Bolton. Another 200 jobs are expected to be sustained along the supply chain that includes L3/Harris, Roband, Collins, EPS and MSB.

Colonel Martin French, DE&S' Lightweight and Medium Attack Systems (LMAS) team leader, said:

"The placement of this contract marks the next major stage of the SPEAR3 weapon system's development and is a result of months of detailed negotiations between MBDA and the LMAS project team.

"Building on the successes and technology achievements of the previous four years' work with MBDA, we now enter the exciting and challenging demonstration phase where we start to prove the system against the UK's requirements and ramp up activities to integrate this highly-capable weapon system onto the F-35B aircraft."

With its unique combination of stealth, cutting-edge radar, sensor technology, and armed with SPEAR3, the F-35 will protect aircraft carriers from enemy ships, submarines, aircraft and missiles.

The UK currently has 21 fifth-generation F-35Bs, having received three new jets on 30 November. The platform's Initial Operating Capability (Maritime) was recently declared and, later this year, F-35 jets will sail with HMS Queen Elizabeth on her maiden Global Carrier Strike Group '21 deployment.

The initial demonstration phase will assess the weapon system against the UK military's requirement through, testing, simulation and trials, which will include controlled firings from a Typhoon aircraft.

The contract forms part of the Complex Weapons portfolio with MBDA, which is on track to deliver £1.2 billion saving to UK defence. It also allows the MOD and MBDA to maximise the export potential of complex weapons, including the first-in-class SPEAR3, which supports UK prosperity and the international agenda.

£213 million UK Government funding to help UK scientists

- Scottish science facilities to share £213 million UK Government investment
- The funding will enable researchers to respond to global challenges such as Covid-19 and climate change
- Part of the UK Government's flagship R&D Roadmap which committed to making the UK the best place in the world for scientists and researchers

to live and work

The UK Government has today (Wednesday 6 Jan) announced a major £213 million government investment to upgrade the UK's scientific infrastructure, with Scottish facilities to benefit.

The investment will equip the UK's leading scientists, universities and research institutes with new state of the art equipment to drive forward exceptional research that will help the UK respond to major challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic and achieving net zero carbon emissions.

The £213 million pot includes £27 million for upgrading and purchasing core equipment for the use of researchers across the UK.

The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) will receive a £20 million investment to upgrade campus infrastructure at its sites in Edinburgh, Oxford, Liverpool City Region and North Yorkshire. This will enable the Council to continue developing flagship projects covering a range of topics, from pre-launch satellite testing to the search for dark matter.

The STFC will receive a further £10 million for laboratory upgrades to support the scientific programmes across laboratories in Edinburgh, Oxfordshire, Liverpool, and North Yorkshire. Investments will enable projects including quantum physics with ultra-cold atoms, artificial intelligence and pre-launch satellite testing.

Medical Research Centre units in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee will share £2.8 million to buy high spec equipment such as microscopes and key computational resources to support Covid-19 research, and long-term programmes in cell biology, human genomics, and wider virology.

This will enable researchers to detect and model disease in more detail than ever before, helping the UK respond to Covid-19 and boosting resilience for future pandemics, as well as other global diseases, such as cancer and dementia.

£34 million will go to upgrading the UK's digital research capabilities, enabling some of the country's brightest minds to conduct pioneering analytical research that will help inform long term policy decisions. Urban data centres in Glasgow, Liverpool and Oxford will share more than £1 million for new hardware to pursue research that will show how Covid-19 has affected social and economic activity in different parts of the UK.

Meanwhile, the University of Essex will be backed to conduct a large-scale household survey to understand how the pandemic has affected issues such as home schooling and family relationships.

The funding package also allocates £15 million for the Capability for Collections Fund (CapCo) to renew and upgrade the most vulnerable research facilities across the UK within galleries, libraries, archives and museums. It will focus on conservation and heritage, modernising these spaces which will help serve local communities for generations.

The investment will ensure the UK is the best place in the world for scientists, researchers and entrepreneurs to live and work, while continuing to attract scientific talent from across the globe.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

> The response from UK scientists and researchers to coronavirus has been nothing short of phenomenal. We need to match this excellence by ensuring scientific facilities are truly world class, so scientists can continue carrying out life-changing research for years to come.
>
> From the world's most detailed microscopes tracking disease to super computers supporting COVID-19 research, our investment will enhance the tools available to our most ambitious innovators across Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dundee. By doing so, scientists and researchers will be able to drive forward extraordinary research that will enable the UK to respond to global challenges as we build back better from the pandemic.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

> The UK Government is committed to supporting Scotland's world-leading scientists and researchers so their hard work can continue to improve lives in the years ahead.
>
> The strength of our Union and the role of the UK Treasury is driving forward pioneering research that will deliver for the whole of the United Kingdom, helping us to respond to huge challenges, such as the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change.

The £213 million investment, delivered through the government's World Class Labs funding scheme and made through seven of UK Research and Innovation's (UKRI) research councils, covers investments in all disciplines from physical sciences to arts and humanities.

Professor Ottoline Leyser, Chief Executive of UKRI said:

> Research and innovation infrastructure is key to delivering the Government's R&D Roadmap, with some of the most innovative ideas with transformative R&D potential requiring people to have access to world-leading infrastructure, including national research facilities, equipment and instrumentation, networks of technologies and digital infrastructures, and knowledge-based resources such as collections and museums.
>
> World-leading infrastructure will help to bring together talent from the public and private sectors and across disciplines to

> tackle society’s most complex challenges. It will act as a magnet for international talent and users, contribute to local and national economies, and generate knowledge and capability critical to UK policy, security and wellbeing. It will also ensure the UK is the world’s most innovative economy by promoting investment in science, research and innovation.

The funding forms part of a £300 million commitment to upgrade scientific infrastructure across the UK, made by Business Secretary Alok Sharma, as part of the government’s ambitious R&D Roadmap published in July 2020.