

LAUNCH OF RISC
CHAIRMAN'S SPEECH

29 March 2007

Home Secretary, Ladies and Gentlemen, members of the press

My name is Stephen Phipson and I am delighted to welcome you to the launch of the Security and Resilience Industry Suppliers Council, or R I S C.

I have the honour of being the inaugural Chairman of RISC.

At a time when counter-terrorism experts tell us that the level of threat today is greater than at any time since World War 2, RISC is a new organisation that will play a vital leadership role in helping the Government put in place the necessary measures to protect the people and critical national infrastructure of the UK from threat.

From today, the UK security and resilience sector, one that has grown immeasurably since 9/11, will act as one, and in concert with Government, to help deliver a stronger and more effective frontline of security and resilience.

I am delighted that the Home Secretary is here today to share in this launch. He has been a strong force of encouragement as we have worked to create this new organisation.

Indeed, it was a speech given by Dr Reid last October at an industry event in Westminster that has helped us to reach this point today.

I would like to congratulate the Government and the Home Secretary on the positive moves today to strengthen our national security. We stand ready to work closely with you in achieving our shared goals.

I would also like to acknowledge the other members of the RISC Council here today – Trade Associations, Academic Institutions and Industry. And particular, I would like to thank RUSI for hosting this event.

This is a formidable group of people and organisations. We also know that the CNI sector is ready to join and play a role in this new operating framework.

Never before has the security and resilience sector agreed to this level of cooperation, bringing with it a determination to channel our respective expertise to the goal of assisting the Government and its agencies in their strategy to prevent, pursue, prepare and protect. The CONTEST Strategy.

Equally, we stand ready to assist in the wider role of resilience in the event of a civil crisis.

RISC represents the best of the private sector, from SMEs and start ups; to prime contractors and global technology leaders.

Expertise from the fields of defence, transportation, aerospace, telecommunications, biotechnology and detection, to name but a few, will now be applied to the public services that underpin civil national security.

RISC also includes all the main trade associations covering police and public security, defence, the technology industry, CBRN and aerospace. It will be the main conduits for SME's to make their important contribution.

We will draw on the intellectual capital of UK's best academics in the fields of resilience, national security, counter-terrorism and foreign affairs. RUSI and Chatham House, are involved initially and more will follow.

RISC will further benefit from independent and objective advice from a number of outside experts.

The combination of these individual strengths into one focussed organisation gives RISC a compelling opportunity to assist and advise Government and the security services.

At a Security & Resilience forum last year, the Home Secretary laid down the challenge explicitly stressing it was "vital that our enterprises sustain the delivery of innovation at a pace that outstrips our adversaries."

Today's development is a proactive move by our sector to deliver a focused response to the Government's call to action.

RISC will be the authoritative voice for the supply community. Over 2000 companies, or in excess of 80% of the supply base, will be represented.

The diverse capabilities of the industrial base - be they biotechnology; chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear protection; counter-terrorism; systems integration; detection; support services; information communications..... and backed by rigorous academic analysis.

These are the raw materials that combined will form the foundations for the next generation of counter-terrorism capabilities.

So what can and will RISC do?

Our vision is to be a dedicated channel so that Government can communicate with vital suppliers, experts and academics in both normal and emergency situations. We will be a source of advice and direct access to the best possible capability and technology.

Our work will deliver on three areas:

First. RISC can help make the UK's resilience more versatile and agile.

A long-term relationship between RISC and Government will yield knowledge of capability that is needed - today and tomorrow. This will reduce the time it takes to move from identifying new problem-solving technology to getting it into the field. But more than that, through RISC we can start work on filling the capability gaps that exist.

And we can also work together on meeting the other objective we share with Government, that of delivering security that does not impinge on people as they go

about their daily, lawful lives. Our view is that more sophisticated protection will mean less restriction on citizens, for example, faster transit through airport checkpoints for passengers.

Not only will synergies between RISC members help to deliver more advanced solutions, but there is an opportunity to deliver improved value.

Second. RISC can help better define R&D priorities

R & D resources are limited, be they Government or Industry, and the range of potential threats and hazards is large.

We must focus on key priorities and ensure we allocate the most appropriate resources to the task in hand.

Working together as RISC, with the Government as our partner, we can develop an R&D 'Road Map'. This will put us in a much stronger position for the future.

Third. RISC can deliver a competitive and innovative UK Industry.

The Home Secretary has tellingly said that we innovate when we are competitive. I agree.

By introducing longer-term procurement plans, underpinned by clear guidance, Government will incentivise industry to invest its resources and capabilities into long-term UK projects. Flowing from this will be a pipeline of R&D and products capable of meeting whatever risks intelligence is suggesting and responding to whatever the incident might be.

RISC will engender new partnerships at a scientific and commercial level that create more robust solutions and more competitive companies. In addition, it will be a route to market for SME's with their innovation and emerging technology.

All of this can create a competitive marketplace that allows the ownership of critical technology to remain within the UK. The dual prize is economic growth and of course, national security,

How can Government help RISC?

RISC is just one part of the equation.

A multiple partnership of RISC, the Government and the private sector owners of critical national infrastructure is now required. And Government can be the main catalyst to this new operating framework.

In addition to the Home Office, we work on a daily basis with all manner of Government departments and agencies, for example those responsible for Transport, Defence and Medical Services.

This is a very wide range of different public organisations and there would be great gain from increased co-ordination. More regular 'point to point' dialogue with Government policymakers, particularly on strategic issues - would greatly benefit long term planning for such diverse issues as health pandemics and the 2012 Olympics.

Furthermore, to achieve an appropriate level of preparedness, Government needs to be willing to fund research and advance development across a range of technologies.

For example, in the Counter Terrorism and CBRN sectors there is already good communication between the MoD and Home Office; and we in RISC will continue to be actively involved in this.

A number of positive Government initiatives, such as the DTI Knowledge Transfer Networks and the CT Centre already provide opportunities for partnerships. RISC, however, will take this to a new level by enshrining multi-lateral relationships.

We also welcome the Chancellor's Budget commitment to accelerate the development of counter-terrorism capabilities and the provision of enhanced funding.

In summary, RISC has set out today a commitment:
To help make the UK's resilience more versatile and agile
To help better define the UK's R&D priorities
To create a more competitive and innovative UK industry

This is a golden opportunity to help better combat threats to our security at philosophical, practical and technological levels.

And through RISC, we have greater prospects than at any time in the past.

I hope today's efforts give us the momentum to realise it.

I am delighted to now ask the Home Secretary to address the audience.