

Sixth Meeting of the U.S.-UK Trade and Investment Working Group

On July 8, Secretary of State for International Trade Dr. Liam Fox MP and United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer met in Washington, DC and discussed the ongoing work of the U.S.-UK Trade and Investment Working Group.

On July 10-11, the UK and United States held the sixth meeting of the U.S.-UK Trade and Investment Working Group in London, which focused on strengthening our trade and investment relationship; laying the groundwork for a potential future trade agreement once the UK leaves the EU; and cooperating on global issues.

Since the Working Group last met in November 2018, USTR published its [negotiating objectives](#) for a trade agreement with the UK. At the Working Group, the UK restated its commitment to publishing its own negotiating objectives, scoping assessment and response to the public consultation before negotiations begin.

The Working Group discussed the progress made in recent months to ensure continuity of trade between our two countries as the UK leaves the EU, notably the signature of Agreements on Mutual Recognition, Marine Equipment, Wine and Distilled Spirits. In addition, both sides signed a bilateral agreement regarding insurance and reinsurance in December 2018.

The Working Group's discussions covered a range of trade topics including services; financial services; procurement; agriculture; sustainability/labor, environment; trade remedies; industrial subsidies; intellectual property; anti-corruption and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SME).

In addition to the Working Group, the UK and the United States held the fourth meeting of the U.S.-UK SME Dialogue in Bristol on July 9. The discussion focused on opportunities presented by emerging technologies for services and digital trade; the obstacles SMEs currently face in trading between the UK and U.S.; and how these obstacles can be reduced, including through a potential future trade agreement. With more than 80 stakeholders in attendance, SMEs participated in a best practice exchange on doing business in the U.S. and the UK in the areas of artificial intelligence, virtual reality and mobile applications. This meeting followed the first sectoral-focused dialogue for marine technology SMEs in Southampton, UK in April 2019 and the participation of the UK in the May 11 Americas Competitiveness Exchange (ACE).

Both sides agreed to hold the fifth SME Dialogue in the United States in early 2020. The U.S. and UK also agreed to explore a second SME best practices exchange in marine technology towards the end of 2019. Lastly, an invitation was extended to the UK for the 13th ACE forum for 2020.

Background

The Working Group was established in July 2017 by UK Secretary of State for International Trade Dr Liam Fox MP and United States Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer. Since its inception, the Working Group has been laying the groundwork for an ambitious and wide-ranging potential future free trade agreement once the UK has left the EU, as well as ensuring commercial continuity for UK and US businesses, workers, and consumers. The Working Group delegations were led by officials from the UK Department for International Trade (DIT) and USTR. It also included representatives from a wide range of UK and U.S. Government departments and agencies. Total trade between the two countries is already worth about £190 billion a year. We are each other's largest source of foreign direct investment and, according to U.S. statistics, the UK and U.S. have around \$1 trillion invested in each other's economies. Every day around one million Americans go to work for UK firms, while around one million Britons go to work for American firms.

[Vacancies: Inspectors of Air Accidents \(Engineering\)](#)

Can you be instrumental in determining causes of civil aircraft accidents and serious incidents worldwide? If so, this Inspector of Air Accidents (Engineering) role is for you, and we'd like to hear from you.

The purpose of this role is to investigate the engineering aspects of aircraft accidents and serious incidents involving civil aircraft operating in the UK and to UK registered or manufactured aircraft overseas.

A full job description and role profile is on the [Civil Service Jobs website](#).

Read about [a week in the life of an Engineering Inspector](#).

The deadline for applications 16 August.

[Form: Livestock record-keeping: Countryside Stewardship](#)

Find out what livestock records Countryside Stewardship agreement holders need to keep.

Form: Capital grant application form: Countryside Stewardship

Applicants should use the capital grant form and relevant annex to apply for a grant for capital items for hedgerows and boundaries, or woodland support schemes.

Construction begins on F35 infrastructure at RAF Lakenheath

The start of construction was marked with a ceremony attended by senior representatives from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), USAF's 48th Fighter Wing and contractors Kier and VolkerFitzpatrick.

Ground was broken on the site which will include the construction of a flight simulator facility, a maintenance unit, new hangars and storage facilities.

DIO awarded a contract worth £160 million to the Kier VolkerFitzpatrick joint venture in November to deliver infrastructure at the Suffolk airbase.

Building work has begun so that the base will be ready to welcome the first of the new aircraft in late 2021.

The contract award is the first in a wider programme of work to support US Air Force operations in the UK, with more than US \$1 billion expected to be invested in the UK over the next 7 to 10 years.

At the height of construction, it is expected that there will be up to 700 people on site supporting the programme. The investment will also provide wider benefits both to the project and to the local economy.

Construction materials from the demolished buildings have been reused on site for subbase for carparks, roads and other hard standing areas. There will also be a concrete plant on site reducing carbon miles and traffic in the community.

DIO is also working closely with Forest Heath District Council and Kier VolkerFitzpatrick to ensure that the opportunities to create employment and training are maximised and that they last beyond the end of construction. In the first 6 months of the project 6 apprentices were taken on and 22 new jobs were created. A 'meet the buyers' event was held recently for local companies

to understand what work opportunities are available in the project.

RAF Lakenheath will be the first permanent international site for US Air Force F-35s in Europe.

USAF 48th Fighter Wing Commander, Colonel Will Marshall, said:

This ceremony is an exciting milestone for the Liberty Wing as we prepare this installation to welcome two squadrons of F-35A Lightning II aircraft and supporting personnel. Breaking ground on this project takes us one step closer to becoming a more lethal and ready force as U.S. Air Forces in Europe and Air Forces Africa's premier combat wing.

DIO USVF Programme Director, Keith Maddison, said:

DIO is proud to be working with the US Air Force and Kier VolkerFitzpatrick to deliver this exciting project.

The infrastructure being delivered will benefit the local economy by providing a range of training and employment opportunities as well as demonstrating our long and proud history of supporting US Air Force capability in the UK.

Managing Director of Aviation and Defence at Kier, James Hindes, said:

We are very pleased to be delivering this prestigious project with VolkerFitzpatrick on behalf of the DIO. Throughout the project we will be working closely with the local supply chain to deliver this crucial infrastructure, allowing RAF Lakenheath to become the first permanent home in Europe for the US Air Force F-35 Fighter Jet.

Managing Director of VolkerFitzpatrick's Civils division, Chris Evans, said:

VolkerFitzpatrick is proud to continue their long standing track record working in collaboration with Kier, DIO and the USAF Lakenheath team on this significant project, which allows us to build on our substantial experience within the civil airports and defence sector. It is great to see works getting underway and I look forward to seeing the programme progress over the coming months.

Further Information

DIO website: www.gov.uk/dio

Twitter: [@mod_dio](#)

Read [DIO's blog](#).