

Philip Hammond speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Philip Hammond MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

Introduction

"Liz, thank you for that introduction...

...and for tearing yourself away from your beloved Instagram account for a few minutes.

And thank you too for being such a great Chief Secretary and stalwart defender of the public purse.

My kids think I'm tight with money...

...but they haven't met Liz Truss.

And in a world obsessed with stories of division and rift in Whitehall...

... I want to hold up my fantastic team at the Treasury as an example of how we can – and do – work together and support each other.

So a big "thank you" to all of them.

Liz, ministers Mel Stride, John Glen, Rob Jenrick and in the Lords, Michael Bates; our whips, Craig Whittaker and Lord Young; and our PPS team of Huw Merriman and Gillian Keegan, led by the inimitable Kwasi Kwarteng.

They all do a great job and they deserve a big round of applause.

For me, it's an honour and a privilege once again to be addressing this Conference as Chancellor in a Conservative Government...

...And to be doing so in Birmingham – a city which has played a pivotal role in the economic history of our country...

...and in the development of the modern Conservative party.

The birthplace of the steam engine; a city which launched an entire new age...

...and went on to become the "workshop of the world", paving the way for the prosperity of the Victorian Era...

...and which today is reinventing itself again as the heart of the Midlands Engine...

...under a great Conservative City Mayor, Andy Street.

And as a sign of our commitment to the Midlands Engine...

...I want to start today by announcing funding to support the creation of a new, locally-led development body for the area around Toton in the East Midlands...

...to attract investment, create jobs and provide opportunities...

...in this area of huge economic potential.

Prime Minister – my birthday present to you: a policy which has the wholehearted support of both Anna Soubry and Andrew Bridgen.

Brexit

Conference, I have good news: this is not going to be a speech all about Brexit.

But it is a speech about our economy...

...so I have to talk about Brexit just a little bit...

...because the outcome, whatever it is, will shape the path of our economy for years to come; and...

...frankly, because everybody else is going to!

And there are a couple of facts which we have to acknowledge and we cannot change:

The first is geographic...

whatever the outcome, Europe will remain firmly anchored just a few miles off the coast of Kent.

So we will be neighbours...

...and we are going to have to carry on living with each other.

Come what may...

...we will go on drinking their wine...

...and lying on their beaches (or, Prime Minister if you prefer, walking in their mountains).

And they're going to carry on speaking our language! (at least we'd better hope they do)

The second fact is economic:

Europe remains, by far, our biggest market.

And after 45 years of membership, Britain's economy has shaped itself around that fact.

Complex supply chains cross and re-cross our borders.

Over 11,000 trucks each day pass through the Port of Dover and the Channel Tunnel alone...

...carrying tens of thousands of tonnes of food, components and finished products in both directions...

...with no more delay or bureaucracy than they would crossing the border from England into Wales.

And our businesses, and the workers whose jobs depend on them...

...need that friction-free access to continue.

That is why I share the Prime Minister's determination to get the Chequers Plan agreed.

A plan which delivers on the decision of the British people;

avoids a hard border in Ireland;

preserves our precious Union...

...AND safeguards British jobs and British businesses.

Mr Tusk says it won't work...

...but that's what people said about the lightbulb in 1878.

Our job is to prove him wrong.

Negotiating and preparing for Brexit is one of the most complex tasks ever undertaken by a peacetime Government...

...so over the next few weeks we must stand together...

...four-square behind the PM...

...to get the best possible outcome for Britain....

...while at the same time taking the precaution of preparing for the possibility of "No Deal".

And be in no doubt that I will maintain enough fiscal firepower to support our economy if that happens.

But I'm going to stick my neck out here today and make a prediction to you...

...that when the Prime Minister gets a deal agreed...

...there will be a boost to our economic growth...

...a "Deal Dividend"...

...which we will share, in line with our balanced approach...

...between keeping taxes low; supporting public services; reducing the deficit; and investing in Britain's future.

But there is another reason why we must stand together...

...and I want to make a plea to this Conference...

...not as Chancellor, but as an ordinary member of the Conservative Party:

We all have views about how to deliver Brexit...

...that are sincerely held...

...and not – if we're totally honest – 100% aligned.

Like everyone in this room, I love this country...

...all of us are patriots...

...all of us are on the same side when it comes to our national interest...

...the side that stands up for Britain...

...and works to get the best outcome for our country.

The point is this:

Brexit is important. Of course it is. And, let me be clear, it is going to happen because that is what the country voted for.

But when the Brexit debate is over...

...(and difficult as it is to imagine today, I promise you that one day it will be)...

...our work, as Conservatives, will not be.

Because more than ever Britain will need strong leadership...

...to see off the threat to our prosperity from Corbyn...

...and to lead our country into our post-Brexit future...

...Leadership that only a united Conservative Party can provide.

And it is that future, Britain's future, that I want to talk about today.

I will share with you my vision for our country...

...and I will be frank with you about the challenges we must overcome to deliver it:

Because Brexit did not happen in a vacuum. It is a product of something deeper and wider.

It happened because over the last 20 or so years, as the world has got smaller, a gap has opened up...

...in Britain and in other developed countries....

...between the theory of how a market economy delivers and distributes rising prosperity....

...and the reality experienced by ordinary people.

Too many people feel that they have lost control;

That they are working for the system...

...but the system isn't working for them.

Too many people have experienced years of slow wage growth...

...too many struggle to make ends meet...

...they feel less secure in their jobs...

...and have seen the housing market spiral beyond their reach.

And as they look around them, they feel a growing concern that they are falling behind.

And that when they voice those concerns...

...the political system doesn't seem to hear them....

...doesn't reflect their values and priorities.

So our challenge is to ensure that 21st Century capitalism delivers for them;

To convince them that our vision of Britain's future can meet their aspirations...

...and that our plan will deliver a better tomorrow for them and their families.

But the world is changing.

So it isn't just about what people have experienced over the last 20 years...

...but about their hopes and fears for their future.

Technological change is transforming not only our economy, but our society and our politics at a rate that none of us have seen in our lifetimes.

In response, we, as a party, have to dare to change too...

...not by abandoning our enduring values and principles...

...but by applying them to the challenges of the future.

And when the history of this period comes to be written...

...I can promise you that it will be this technological transformation, and how we manage it – not Brexit – that will define the future of our country and our party.

Now, despite what you may think...

...or may even have read in certain newspapers...

...I am an optimist.

Some, I understand, even call me 'glass half full Phil'.

(Depends of course on who's buying!)

I am an enthusiast for the change that is coming.

And for the benefits it will bring to our society.

And I am committed to preparing Britain for it.

In the next decade or so, Artificial Intelligence, self-driving cars, personalized medicine, virtual reality, advanced robotics and many, many other cutting-edge developments will all begin to transform our lives.

A future where cars don't pollute, and we've all but eliminated traffic accidents;

Where you are able to order and 3D print a product at home, instead of waiting for it to be delivered;

Where cancer is tamed, so that fewer of us have to go through the heartache of losing a loved one to this cruel disease.

All of this is science fact; not fiction.

All of it already taking shape now...

...not in the distant future.

And all happening here in the UK...

...in our world-leading Universities...

...in our research institutes and laboratories...

...and in thousands of dynamic and innovative businesses in towns and cities across the length and breadth of Britain.

But I understand that my enthusiasm for driverless cars may not be so readily

shared by someone who earns their living as a cab driver...

...and that home 3D printing may look more of a threat than an opportunity to someone who works for a parcel delivery firm.

So we have to take our people with us...

...be open with them about the scale and nature of the change that is coming...

...about the disruption that change on this scale will inevitably bring;

Set out clearly the benefits that individuals and families will see from the digital age...

...and how we will help them to prepare for it...

...and deal with the consequences of it.

Reassure the very many who will worry about what new technologies mean for their job security...

...worry that the gains will be made by the few...

...and that they will be left behind.

Show them that, crucially, the change that technology is driving will address their concerns, not make them worse.

And we will do this by harnessing the power of the market economy...

...taking a model which has evolved continuously down the ages...

...so that the capitalism of the 21st Century looks nothing remotely like that of the 19th...

...and adapting it once again to address the challenges and speak to the values of a new generation...

...because those challenges can only be overcome by harnessing that power...

...that is the only way to deliver our social, economic and environmental goals...

...to build a better Britain for our children.

And, Conference, this mission is urgent. Because if we cannot make that case convincingly...

...if we cannot demonstrate our commitment to make that evolution happen...

...if we look for a moment like the party of "no change"...

...then we should not be surprised that some will be tempted by the dangerous populism of our opponents.

THE CHOICE

Because it is clear from what we heard last week from Labour...

...that this country now faces a choice.

A choice between the seductive simplicity of the Brave New World of Corbyn and McDonnell's populism...

...where the narrative is all about easy answers...

...and our pragmatism, which is sceptical of ideologues...

...which starts with the real world we live in, and seeks to make it better...

...and recognises that there are no short-cuts and no free-lunches on the road to a better Britain...

...that no wealth is created without work...

... no gain without sacrifice...

... no reward without effort.

Because let's be clear: the rules of the game have changed.

We have a Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer who's declared aim in life is "fomenting the overthrow of capitalism".

Now, Liz, that really is a disgrace!

The model that has delivered 200 years of economic growth...

...that has seen living standards in this country more than double in my lifetime...

...that has lifted countless hundreds of millions out of poverty around the world...

...and that has secured our freedoms and our liberties down the ages...

...is rejected out of hand by Corbyn and McDonnell in favour of the failed and faded ideologies of socialism...

...not because they believe they would enhance economic growth...

...but because they don't care about economic growth...

...because they are more interested in re-distributing wealth than in creating more of it.

Because they value political ideology above real world solutions for real people.

All they do, is look it up in the Socialist manual:

Railways? Nationalise them.

Wealth? Confiscate it.

Run out of money? Just borrow more.

Answers from a discredited ideology that will never solve real-world problems.

A backward-looking party...

... intellectually unequipped to tackle the complex challenges of the 21st Century ...

...and totally unfit to govern this country!

Conference, Corbyn boasts that Labour are a "Government in waiting".

Well, I say "Let's keep him waiting...

...this year, next year and every year!"

But let me be clear about one thing...

...while Labour's answers will solve nothing...

...their questions deserve a response.

And we must answer their challenges with our own, Conservative solutions...

...based on realism, not populism...

...delivery, not rhetoric.

It's what we Conservatives have always done...

...and it's what we will do again...

...showing ourselves worthy of the privilege of governing post-Brexit Britain.

Harnessing the power of the market economy.

Focussing on the long-term and the structural, not the quick and the superficial...

...Because Conference, we know you can't get long-term change on Amazon Prime...

...ordered today and delivered tomorrow.

As our party renews its mandate for the next generation, this is the ground on which we must fight.

Margaret Thatcher, as so often, put it beautifully:

"We are in the business of planting trees for our children and grandchildren

– or we have no business being in politics at all”.

Colleagues, we will not outbid Corbyn with short-term gimmicks that cause long-term damage;

We will not outspend him with reckless borrowing;

We will not promise the illusory utopia he offers...

...because, as those who have tried it have shown time and time again, it is based on a lie and it always ends in tears.

But no one should mistake our belief in evolution over revolution...

...for a lack of passion or commitment to change;

To a paucity of values or ideals.

Throughout history, Conservative governments from Peel to Disraeli to Thatcher...

...have delivered momentous change...

...drawing on our values that have stood the test of time.

The importance of family and community;

The strength of our nation, united by history, culture and identity...

...standing strong as a force for good in the world.

The insight that economic freedom goes hand in hand with political freedom...

...and above all, the belief in the power of enterprise as the route to unleash talent and to improve lives.

That is why we back business.

We back business...

...as the cornerstone of a successful economy...

...as a force for good in our society...

...and as an essential expression of our values.

So just in case anyone, anywhere, was in any doubt at all...

...let me say it, loud and clear:

The Conservative Party is, and always will be, the party of business.

That means we listen to business.

And we have heard the concerns about how the apprenticeship levy is working...

...so today we've set out a series of measures to allow firms more flexibility in how the levy is spent.

But we know that we may need to do more to ensure that the levy supports the development of the skilled workforce our economy needs.

So in addition to these new flexibilities, we will engage with business on our plans for the long term operation of the levy.

Working hand-in-hand with employers to ensure that every young person can fulfil their potential and achieve their dreams.

And we will provide £30m of support to "Be the Business"...

...a business-led initiative to get big-companies to mentor small companies... so that they can develop their management and leadership skills to make the most of their potential...

...strengthening the backbone of our economy from the ground up.

Enterprise. Freedom. Stability...

...Family. Community. Nation.

These are our Conservative values. They have served us well over the centuries past. And they will serve us well in the years ahead.

Values do not change.

The task before us now is to apply these values...

...to the challenges of the 21st Century.

Record

We have made a start.

Ten years on from the financial crisis, Conservative leadership has delivered Britain a stronger, more resilient economy.

We've rebuilt our financial system...

... forcing the banks to operate with greater responsibility...

... protecting savers...

... insisting that our financial markets must serve our country, and not the other way round.

We've got Labour's deficit, which reached almost 10% of GDP...

...down to less than 2%.

And this year, thanks to the difficult decisions we have taken...

...and the hard work of the British people...

...we will, at last, see our national debt starting its first sustained fall in a generation.

We have delivered eight years of economic growth since 2010...

...creating over 3 million more jobs...

...and taking unemployment to a 43-year low;

We've announced an unprecedented £84 billion real-terms funding boost for the NHS...

...what the NHS says it needs...

...and more than Labour promised at the last election...

...showing our commitment to Britain's most vital public service;

We've maintained Britain as the world's fifth largest economy...

...and London as the world's financial capital.

We've delivered tax cuts for 31 million people...

And our National Living Wage has lifted the wages of the lowest paid by £2,000 a year since 2016...

...so that income inequality is lower this year under a Conservative Government than in every single year of the last Labour government.

A remarkable record of Conservative achievement that we are justifiably proud of.

After the years of hard work to rebuild our economy and our public finances...

...there is light at the end of the tunnel.

But our pride in achievement does not lead us to complacency.

We must now apply this same approach to renew the mandate for the market economy in the 21st century...

...and with it the mandate of the modern Conservative Party to govern.

A focus on what is in the long-term interest of our country and our people.

So that when those children and grandchildren of whom Margaret Thatcher spoke so eloquently...

...ask us what our generation is doing for them...

...we can look them in the eye and tell them how we are building the better Britain we want to bequeath to them.

We can tell them about how we have raised public investment to its highest level in generations...

...building and upgrading the roads and railways that connect our country...

...and the digital infrastructure that will enable the future.

We can tell them how our reforms are unlocking billions of pounds of much needed investment in high growth businesses...

...and about how our Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine...

...and our Mayoral devolution and City and Growth Deals...

...are beginning to address the regional imbalances in our economy.

We can tell them about how our modern Industrial Strategy is preparing for the future...

...by putting Britain at the cutting-edge of a technology revolution which will improve the lives of people across the world...

...and will be the bedrock on which our future prosperity is built...

...creating millions of new, better-paid jobs for British workers.

We can tell them how we are going to build more homes than any Government since Macmillan...

...and are on course to reach 300,000 additional homes a year...

...about the support that Help to Buy and stamp duty abolition have already delivered to hundreds of thousands of homebuyers.

All key steps on the road to restoring the Conservative dream of home ownership for millions of young people the length and breadth of our country.

We can tell them how we are making sure working people have the support they need to navigate the challenge of automation to a higher-wage future...

...with a new system of T-Level vocational training,

...millions of high quality apprenticeships...

...and a world-first National Retraining Scheme...

...and today I can announce a £100 million initial commitment to delivering this scheme in partnership with the CBI and the TUC.

We can tell them of our determination to update our market economy for the digital age:

Adam Smith taught us that the key to the power of the market to deliver for the good of society is competition.

And just as, in late 19th Century America, concerns about the near-monopoly of Standard Oil and the railroad cartels led to the introduction of the world's first anti-monopolies legislation...

...so today, the expansion of the global tech giants and digital platforms...

...while of course bringing huge benefits to consumers...

...raises new questions about whether too much power is being concentrated in too few global technology businesses.

That is why I have asked President Obama's former chief economist, Jason Furman, to lead an expert panel to review the UK's competition regime, to ensure it is fit for the digital era.

And it isn't just competition policy that needs updating.

We can tell them how we have led the debate on reforming the international tax system for the digital economy...

...insisting that the global internet giants must contribute fairly to funding our public services.

And let me be clear today:

The best way to tax international companies is through international agreements...

...but the time for talking is coming to an end...

...and the stalling has to stop.

If we cannot reach agreement...

...the UK will go it alone with a 'Digital Services Tax' of its own.

Conclusion

Conference – I have set out my argument for the renewal of our economic creed to secure for Britain the benefit of the market economy for the years to come...

...to ensure it can respond to the concerns and meet the aspirations of the next generation.

Because Corbyn's plan offers no future for Britain.

And it is our duty to provide a better answer.

To make the case for the long term over the short term.

For the substantial over the superficial.

For evolution over revolution.

Our duty is to agitate constantly ...

...restless to improve the lives of ordinary families across the country...

...looking beyond Brexit into our future...

... to map out the path to Britain's continued success.

Conference, I have 3 children and I want for your children and grandchildren what I want for mine.

For them to live in a country that is built on secure foundations...

... with its best days still to come...

...and ready to capitalise on the untold promise of the century that lies before us.

So we need to have the courage now to regenerate capitalism once again...

...to pass on something worthwhile to the next generation.

That is what being a Conservative is all about.

And to those who will say that the measured message of evolution...

...will be drowned out by the shrill voices of the demagogues and the populists...

I say put our trust in the common sense of the British people, and they will put their trust in us.

And to those who will ask if the Conservative Party has the stomach for this fight.

I say, Conference, I know this party – and I know that we do.

I know that we have the wisdom to put the differences of today behind us.

I know that we have the reserves and the energy to focus on the challenges still to come.

I know that we have the resolve to fight for our children's future.

For a sustainably better Britain

A Britain with a world-leading NHS...

...with first class education and training...

...a welfare system that is focussed on work...

...an environment that we will leave in a better state than we found it...

...streets that are safe...

...homes for the next generation...

...armed forces that are respected around the world

A Britain with an economy that creates opportunities for all.

A beacon to the world...

...a land of entrepreneurs, creators, designers, do-ers, thinkers, makers
a civilised, tolerant, successful nation.

Respected and admired the world over.

That is the Britain that I want to build.

So that when our children ask us what we did with the privilege of our time
in office, we can tell them with our heads held high...

...we built a better Britain for you.

Thank you."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

[Chris Grayling: Investing in transport, delivering a strong economy](#)

Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

"Ladies and Gentlemen

This is a Government that is dealing with big decisions.

A government that takes big decisions.

A government that is doing things that others have run away from.

As Transport Secretary, I am proud to be part of a Government who finally, after 50 years of delay, got a Parliamentary majority – on both sides of the house – in favour of expanding Heathrow Airport

Our flagship airport is full, and there are airlines queuing up to fly from

it.

There are cities all round the UK which need to be better connected to the outside world.

We have some great airport success stories. Manchester. Belfast. Leeds Bradford. Newcastle. Edinburgh and Glasgow. Cardiff. And of course here in Birmingham.

But we need a strong hub airport to succeed, and the vote in Parliament, with a majority of nearly 300, has set us on the path to delivering that expanded Heathrow.

Beyond Heathrow we have also given our regional airports freedom to expand as well.

Today I can announce our recommitment to one of those airports, Newquay. It is vital to the economy of the South West, and the Government provides support to the crucial air links to London. I can tell you that we will be renewing that support for another four years, and with the jets our fantastic team of Cornish MPs have been calling for.

And while we are on the subject of teams, let me say a word of thanks to mine. My ministers Jo Johnson, Liz Sugg, Jesse Norman and the first female Muslim government minister in the commons – Nus Ghani.

Our two PPSs, James Heappey and Bim Afolami. Our Commons whip, Michelle Donelan and our fresh, new whip in the Lords – someone you might just remember, Lord Young, or Sir George Young as he was when he was Transport Secretary. And finally Stephen Metcalfe who is Government Envoy for Year of Engineering. Thanks to you all.

Of course it hasn't always been an easy year for aviation.

When I stood in front of you a year ago, I had just returned from Manchester Airport where I met the first flight bringing passengers back after the collapse of Monarch Airlines.

In the following days we brought back nearly 100,000 people.

And when I say we, this was a huge team effort involving other UK airlines, the Civil Aviation Authority and ten Government Departments.

We all worked together to get people home and I am proud of the swift response. It was a tribute to what this country can do in times of change.

The loss of Monarch was a sad day.

But our aviation sector continues to thrive.

The Monarch planes are now flying under different colours.

The slots at the airports were snapped up quickly.

And our successful aviation industry moved on to meet new challenges.

I am proud to live in a country where our industries and our businesses instinctively know how to adapt and grow following changes.

That ladies and Gentlemen is what will happen to this country after Brexit, regardless of the outcome of negotiations.

And those who say that Brexit will mean the planes stop flying are doomsayers who do not know what they are talking about.

RAILWAYS

Ladies and Gentlemen, whilst our aviation sector has had a strong year, the same cannot be said of our railways.

I have already apologised for the disruption caused by the failures in the introduction of the new timetable in May. It was unacceptable.

And I want to say now again how sorry I am that so many passengers had such a difficult time.

For us as Conservatives it was particularly frustrating.

Because the new timetable is part of a big investment programme in the railways, to deliver more trains and more seats for passengers in both the North and the South.

The chaos cannot and will not be allowed to happen again.

But it is clear that the system has greater challenges than a failed timetable introduction.

In the last twenty years the railways have been through an extraordinary period of growth.

The number of trains and passengers travelling has doubled.

Trains are packed. The network is creaking. Passengers experience too many things going wrong.

Which is why today I can announce that we will introduce once click compensation for delays and disruption – making it easier for people to claim compensation.

But I want the railways to work better for customers.

As Conservatives in Government, we are spending more on rail than any Government in modern times.

New trains.

Upgraded tracks.

New routes. Across the North, in the South and in the Midlands.

But after a decade under Labour when things stood still, we have much ground to catch up.

Do you know, they let a Northern Rail franchise with no new investment at all?

Our response.

We let a Northern Rail franchise which is replacing and refurbishing every single train.

Where Labour fail – Conservatives deliver.

But I do not believe the industry is making the most of our investment.

It's clear that the way our railways are run no longer works when the system is under pressure.

Last year we started to evolve towards a more joined up railway. One team running track and train.

But that process of evolution is no longer enough.

That is why two weeks ago I announced an urgent review of the way our railways work for passengers, led by the former Chief Executive of British Airways, Keith Williams.

We need wholesale change, and I have asked Keith to set out the best way of delivering just that. And to do so quickly.

We will publish a White Paper on delivering a rail revolution for Britain next year, and we will begin work immediately to deliver a more passenger focused railway.

But I have news for our opponents. This will not stop us from investing in our railways.

Here in Birmingham Andy Street and I just unveiled plans for the expansion of this City's rail network, by reopening a line which was axed by British Rail 50 years ago.

It's what can be achieved when there is a strong relationship between a Metro Mayor and a Secretary of State.

And yesterday I joined the Andy for the first piece of construction on the site of the new HS2 station.

It's already helping regenerate another part of Birmingham. But crucially HS2 will ease pressure on our overcrowded rail network.

But it was not only rail that put Birmingham on the transport map.

This is one of our great centres of the automotive industry.

And whilst there is much talk about trains and planes, it is what is happening on our roads that will make the biggest difference to you.

I know that most people depend on a good road system in their daily lives.

Demand for road transport has grown. There are more and more cars and lorries on our roads.

More and more people depend on our roads for their livelihoods.

So we have launched the biggest roads upgrade programme for decades, investing every penny you pay in car tax back into improving the roads you drive on.

We're expanding capacity on the motorways, with a smart motorways programme that's adding space for motorists from Portsmouth to Oldham. It means an extra lane and less traffic for you.

We've just opened the last leg of motorway grade road from London to Newcastle. Heaven knows why that didn't happen years ago. And it certainly didn't happen when Labour was in power.

Today they accuse us of doing nothing for the North, when it was they who neglected it for so long, leaving us to play catch-up today.

And the same is true across the country...

We're moving ahead with dualling the A303, providing crucial improvements for the South West.

We're upgrading the A14 through East Anglia.

We're starting work on a new crossing to ease the pressures on the M25 at Dartford.

But we know it's not just motorways and big A roads that need investment.

We're also upgrading the Major Road Network – the next tier down of roads which play such an important part in good regional connections.

And today I can announce the details of the first five schemes which will now start in development.

- A new section of the York Outer Ring Road.
- Modernising Gallows Corner in East London.
- The infamous farmyard bottleneck, Grizebeck Bypass, near Barrow in Furness.
- The A614 near Ollerton in Nottinghamshire.
- And new slip roads in Thurrock.

We will work with those local authorities and full details of their schemes will be available in the spring.

I'm also acutely aware that we have problems with the conditions of our roads in many areas.

Potholes are a blight on every motorist. And too many are caused by poor road repairs.

We're already spending record amounts on fixing potholes.

But I will be setting out further plans in the coming weeks to tackle this blight.

But it's not just about building and maintaining roads.

There is a revolution coming in the way we use those roads.

Low emission cars.

Driverless vehicles.

Smart data that improves the way we plan journeys.

Three weeks ago we held the first international zero emission vehicle summit, attracting visitors from around the world, as well as great UK innovators.

Making the transition to a new generation of ultra low and zero emission vehicles is one of the most important challenges of our time.

We have to meet the challenge of climate change, when road transport is one of the biggest contributors to it.

We have to improve air quality in our cities. The health of our citizens makes that essential.

That's why we are committing to ending the sale of new diesel and petrol cars by 2040, and to making rapid progress towards greener vehicles now.

But I do want to be clear about this.

Newer diesel cars today are cleaner than ever before and of course there will be a role for diesel in years to come while technology evolves.

But for most motorists in and around major towns and cities we want an electric or ultra-low emission vehicle to become the obvious choice for you.

Thanks to help from this Conservative government, motorists are already buying into the need for change. One in twelve of the new cars sold in August were low emission vehicles.

That number will rise.

And we are doing everything we can to support that transition.

Supporting research into battery technology at the Faraday Centre.

Incentivising buyers of low emission vehicles, cars, buses and vans.

It's one of the great challenges for our generation, and we will meet it.

It's more than an electric revolution, though.

We are now rapidly approaching the era of the driverless car.

Every new model launched today seems to do more and more for itself.

We expect the first truly driverless cars to be on our roads within three or four years.

It is going to transform our lives.

With more opportunities for the elderly and disabled to be mobile.

Changing the way people use cars in our Cities.

And helping deliver much better public transport.

But it's not just about our Cities.

I'm only too aware of the need to improve public transport in our rural areas and smaller towns.

We're already seeing the first signs of change that can improve that. New bus services are starting that respond to a click on your mobile phone, rather than following a set route.

And new types of vehicle will help, like the driverless pods being developed by Westfield here in the West Midlands.

It's a revolution that will truly transform lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen. We are driving real change for the travelling public, and for those who ship freight around the country.

More capacity.

Greener journeys.

Smart use of technology.

Supporting our flourishing shipping industry and ports.

Spending money supporting new cycle routes in our Cities.

But above all investing in transport in a way that Labour never did.

They always promise the earth. They're doing it again now.

But in Government they deliver very little.

The transport investments we are making will be essential to our country in the post-Brexit world.

If we are to be a dynamic, entrepreneurial country, a truly Global Britain, we need the roads, railways, ports and airports to support that. There is much to do. There are problems to solve. But we will deliver for Britain.

BREXIT

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me say a word about Brexit.

You know that I was the first Cabinet Minister to declare publicly for Brexit.

I believe passionately that Britain is doing the right thing.

I have represented Britain on different European Councils for the past eight years. I have seen the workings of the EU, and what it needs to do to secure its future.

But I believe that the EU's needs are not Britain's needs. That we are better outside, as good friends and neighbours, not part of the march towards a federal Europe.

So no one should doubt my Brexit credentials.

We are doing the right thing.

And so is our Prime Minister.

I want us to make sure we get out.

I want us to be in charge of our own destiny.

But I also want a partnership in trade, security and research. It makes sense for all of us. I hope we can agree that partnership.

And yes, we are making preparations in case we cannot. We are planning for all eventualities right across our transport system – and we have been for months and months.

Under Theresa May this country will not accept a deal that is bad for Britain.

Or one that is bad for the union that is the United Kingdom.

So that is why we are backing our Prime Minister.

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It's almost a hundred years since the first Labour government.

They have always taken Britain backwards.

They have always cost people jobs.

They sit on the sidelines promising everyone everything, and then leave most people worse off.

And they have never been so extreme and dangerous as they are today.

We cannot allow the election of the most extreme Labour government we have ever seen.

So we have to stick together.

We have to unite to deliver Brexit.

And then take the battle to a group of Marxists who would wreck this country for decades.

It is a historic task, and one where we must succeed."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

Dominic Raab: Making a success of Brexit

Dominic Raab, Secretary of State for the Department for Exiting the EU, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

"I want to start with an appeal for tolerance.

We all know that Brexit is a controversial subject.

It excites strong passions.

But as a Party and as a country, we also need to keep a sense of proportion.

Everybody had a vote.

And most people have an opinion.

But only a small minority think it's worth fighting over,

Except when they're on Twitter.

It's important to remember that the person sitting next to you...

On the bus into town...

At your desk at work...

Round the breakfast table...

And, yes, here in this hall today...

May have voted the other way to you in the referendum.

That's the genius of our democracy.

We express our differences at the ballot box, but afterwards we come together, and respect the result.

When it comes to wanting what's best for Britain, we're all on the same side.

As someone who campaigned for Leave, not only do I respect the opinions of those who wanted us to remain in the EU.

I'd go further.

I think they made some important arguments and highlighted difficulties that some on my side were too quick to dismiss.

Disentangling our laws, our institutions and our economy from Brussels after more than forty years of EU membership was never going to be straightforward or risk free.

To rise to this challenge, we'll need some unity of purpose.

And I believe we're at our best when we work together...

To forge something bigger than the sum of our parts...

As a government...

As a party...

And as a country.

For my part, I'm lucky to have a brilliant Ministerial team, with Martin Callanan, Robin Walker, Suella Braverman, and Chris Heaton-Harris working tirelessly to deliver the very best Brexit we can.

And the reason I accepted the Prime Minister's offer to join her Cabinet as Secretary of State is because my approach to Brexit is pragmatic, not

dogmatic.

Do I think the deal we are pursuing is perfect?

Of course not.

Is it everything I wanted?

No it isn't.

This is a negotiation.

There have been compromises.

We're not decoupling as quickly or as completely as some would like.

And we have been prepared to accept certain EU requirements, in order to secure our own interests.

I've been back and forth to Brussels, negotiating the details of our Withdrawal Agreement and the framework for our Future Relationship.

The vast majority of the Withdrawal Agreement has been settled, although we still have some tricky issues outstanding, and we're making good progress on the Future Relationship.

We have been reasonable.

Some say too reasonable.

But our proposals would deliver a historic agreement that provides a roadmap out of the EU and a final deal that will be good for the whole country.

A deal that delivers on the referendum, because that is our democratic duty.

A deal that manages the risks of Brexit, because that is our responsibility.

A deal that grasps the opportunities of Brexit, because we're at our best when we're optimistic about the future.

And a deal that protects our precious Union, because we are the Conservative and Unionist Party.

To those of my fellow Eurosceptics who think it's not good enough...

I say this.

If I'd told you three years ago that we were going to...

End free movement...

Stop the vast annual budget contributions.

Leave the Single Market...

Get out of the Customs Union.

Pursue an independent trade policy...

Make Parliament supreme.

Protect the Union...

Exit the Common Fisheries Policy.

And ditch the Common Agricultural Policy...

You'd have bitten my arm off.

If the EU match our ambition and pragmatism, that's what our proposals will deliver.

I said: 'if the EU match our ambition and pragmatism'.

Unfortunately, that wasn't on display in Salzburg.

Our Prime Minister has been constructive and respectful.

In return we heard jibes from senior leaders...

And we saw a starkly one-sided approach to negotiation.

Where the EU's theological approach allows no room for serious compromise.

And yet we are expected to cast aside the territorial integrity of our own country.

If the EU want a deal, they need to get serious.

And they need to do it now.

At the same time, as in any negotiation, we will listen to alternative ways of delivering on the strategic criteria we have set out.

Because a good deal would be the best outcome for everyone.

But our willingness to compromise is not without limits.

We are leaving the European Union in fact, not just in name.

If we can't obtain a deal that secures that objective...

If an attempt is made to lock us in via the back door of the EEA or Customs Union...

If the only offer from the EU threatens the integrity of our Union...

Then we will be left with no choice but to leave with no deal.

That is why the whole of the government machine is busy preparing for No Deal.

Not because we want it...

Not because we think it's likely...

But because it might happen.

Some people say that No Deal is unthinkable.

Wrong.

What is unthinkable is that this government...

Or any British government...

Could be bullied by the threat of some kind of economic embargo, into signing a one-sided deal against our country's interests.

When it comes to no deal, we've heard some lurid predictions from the prophets of doom.

They claim planes will be grounded.

That ports will be blocked.

Let's have some common sense here.

Why on earth would any of these things happen?

Unless someone decided to make them happen.

Even if we can't secure a comprehensive deal with the EU...

I find it hard to believe that they would...

For narrow political ends...

Seek to punish Britain in such a crass and counterproductive way...

Threatening European as well as UK businesses and jobs...

And if I'm wrong, it's hardly an attractive argument for those suggesting we should stay in the club.

The reality: yes there are risks and potential short term disruption, but we'll deal with any problems that might arise in the event of No Deal in a calm and sensible manner...

As we've set out in 77 Technical Notices, from aviation to car insurance.

Beyond all the complexities of Brexit, one thing must be sacrosanct.

Democracy itself.

Two years ago we held a referendum in which more people voted than at any time, before or since.

Like any national vote, there were claims and counter-claims, and plenty of controversy.

It was ever thus...

Democracy is rough-edged, not clean-cut.

But one thing was crystal clear, and we all know it in our hearts.

It was even written in that official government leaflet sent to every household.

Let me read it to you:

"This is your decision.

The government will implement what you decide."

We did decide.

It was close but it was clear.

Britain voted to leave the EU.

Respecting the result...

That's the essence of our democracy.

And I have been heartened by the fact that the majority of those who voted to Remain have accepted the referendum verdict.

For them, the integrity of our democracy is far more important than winning or losing on any one issue.

But I'll tell you what's not democracy.

The efforts of a small, but influential group of senior politicians and establishment figures to overturn the result of the referendum.

They want to stop us leaving.

You can just picture them, sitting in an expensive advertising agency, discussing how to claim that black is white.

“Our research shows that the public doesn’t like the idea of a second referendum.”

“That’s all right – we’ll rebrand it a People’s Vote. They might buy that.”

“But there’s a real sense that Leave won fair and square. Most people just want to move on.”

“Don’t worry – we’ll bankroll a campaign to scare the wits out of them.”

“Hang on – the Project Fear stuff didn’t work too well first time around.”

“That’s because it wasn’t scary enough. This time we’ll claim that No Deal means patients won’t get their medicines, mobile phone roaming charges will go through the roof and space debris will fall from the sky.”

Honestly, it would be pathetic if it wasn’t so dangerous.

And under Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour party has now opened the door to reversing Brexit ...

A clear breach of their manifesto promise.

A deliberate tactic to weaken the UK’s negotiating position for their own political gain.

Just imagine, for a moment, if they succeeded.

Trust in our democracy would all but vanish.

Most people, whether they voted Remain or Leave, would see it for what it is.

A shameless ruse by an establishment that thinks that it has the right to keep asking the same question until it gets the answer it wants.

And who would benefit?

If there is mass disillusionment with the system, then it’s the populists...

The far left and the alt right...

Who will reap the reward, as they have in other countries where the establishment has ignored people’s concerns.

Where voters have been told that their hopes and fears are not important because the establishment knows best.

And because of that, in many of these nations, the extremists are on the march.

That's where this kind of disdain for democracy leads.

You don't think it could happen here?

Just look at the Labour Party.

A few years ago, the moderates of New Labour were in charge.

We had our differences with Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

Big differences.

But there was a shared understanding about the basic freedoms and tolerance that shore up our democracy...

And the civilised conduct of politics...

Give or take a couple of punches from John Prescott.

What happened?

Left wing extremists, long confined to the margins, took their chance, and took control of the Labour party.

Today, those extremists are led by Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell.

They've captured the Labour Party, lock, stock and barrel.

Under the nose of Labour's leaders, they're using all the tools in the extremists' armoury.

Intimidation.

Fanaticism.

Scapegoating.

Especially against Jews.

The cosyng up to Holocaust deniers and terrorists.

The casual equation of Jews with the Israeli government.

The vicious abuse levelled at their own Jewish MPs.

That a once-great mainstream party should stoop so low, is a stain on Britain.

I say to Labour: you'd be surprised how many British people take this personally.

They know things that you choose to forget.

Eighty years ago – 1938 – Nazi Germany invaded Czechoslovakia.

The lucky few fled.

Some of them to Britain.

One Jewish family arrived in England with a little boy called Peter.

He was six years old and he spoke no English.

That little boy grew up knowing that his grandmother, grandfather, most of his relatives...

The loved ones left behind...

Had been systematically murdered for no other reason than that they were Jews.

That little boy learnt English.

He got into a Grammar School.

And grasped the opportunities and embraced the tolerance that our great country offers.

He became a food-manager at Marks and Spencer...

And married a clothes buyer...

A Church of England girl from Bromley.

But he never forgot what had happened to his family.

That little boy was my father.

And I will honour his memory by fighting the scourge of antisemitism and racism until my last breath.

Because, none of us can rest until Corbyn, McDonnell and their extremist gang have been driven back to the margins where they belong.

And none of us should give succour to Labour's political opportunism on Brexit...

Which has just one aim...

To put Jeremy Corbyn in Downing Street.

That's why we must come together over Brexit...

And recognise that what divides us is nothing compared to our struggle with the Labour party.

An epic struggle we must win not just to defend people's jobs and livelihoods...

But to preserve the free and tolerant democracy that we cherish in this

country.

Conference, it's time for us to stand together to make a success of Brexit...

So that the United Kingdom goes from strength to strength.

I know we can do it.

I know we will do it.

Because I believe in the British people.

I'm an optimist.

Not the rose-tinted kind.

I'm a stubborn optimist who believes we breathe life into hope through the tenacity of our efforts.

And I'm optimistic history will judge Brexit, not on the tortuous haggle with Brussels...

But as a springboard to a buccaneering global embrace of free trade...

To boost our amazing SMEs with wider export opportunities...

To create the jobs of the future...

To cut tariffs and to reduce the cost of living for low and middle income families...

And to give the poorest countries in the world their chance to trade and stand on their own two feet...

The surest route to real economic independence.

I'm an optimist, because I see that Britain is a country bursting with talent.

Scientific talent.

Creative talent.

Entrepreneurial talent.

We have a dynamic culture that takes the best of what we have and mixes it with bold innovations in every field of endeavour.

Our strength is that we keep producing and attracting amazing people who want to contribute to something bigger than themselves...

To something bigger than the sum of its parts.

That's why we're delivering Brexit.

Yes, to control immigration and regain public trust in the system.

But also to expand our global horizons...

So we attract the best and the brightest from around the world...

To invent the next life-saving drug...

To pioneer the next breath-taking technology...

To help us write the next chapter in our history.

Above all, I'm optimistic we will deliver Brexit.

Faithful to the referendum...

A spring-board to democratic revival...

To take back control over our own destiny.

So that politicians like me, never forget the humility which makes us accountable to you.

We've had our arguments.

But now is the time to put them behind us.

Now is the time to come together.

Because this is a moment for the optimists.

And ours is a country ready to shine."

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

[Esther McVey speech at Conservative Party Conference 2018](#)

Esther McVey, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, speaking today at

Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

"Hello everyone

It's an honour to be standing here today at this year's conference in Birmingham.

A city with a great history.

A dynamic city.

A thriving city.

A city where employment has increased by over 67, 000 in 8 years.

Now I come from another great city, Liverpool.....

And Liverpool's riding high in the Premier League.

But, after last week's Labour Conference, not doing so well in the political league!

For in my home city, we witnessed the extraordinary spectacle of a shadow cabinet minister praising the legacy of Derek Hatton and the Militant Tendency running the city in the 1980s.

Yes, you heard it right, a member of the shadow cabinet praising a council that broke the law; fleeced the taxpayer and brought a proud city to the brink of bankruptcy. And the ringleader is back. Derek Hatton has just been accepted back into the Labour Party – after 33 years – inspired to return by Corbyn's far left Socialism which now makes up Labour Party Policy.

Momentum is the modern day Militant

And remember there are 3 M's in Momentum...

Militant, Militant, Militant...

Can you imagine it?

... this country with Corbyn, McDonnell and Abbott at the helm?

It would be a political nightmare.

With Labour doing what it always does – leaving office with higher unemployment than it inherited!

Now, I became a Conservative not just because of the things we stand for – like aspiration, patriotism, freedom and responsibility...

... but also because of what I stand against – the ugly, destructive, Marxist, Militant, socialists of the past...

And I am here today...

...to join you to rise up as one strong Conservative force, for the good of the economy, for the sake of our country – its values and our future.

For bullying and intimidation should not be allowed to drive our politics into the gutter.

Remember what John McDonnell said about me...

That I should be lynched...

Well he picked on the wrong woman...

And let me tell you a bit about the department Corbyn's Labour tries to malign. The Department for Work and Pensions which has helped over 3.3 million more people into work since 2010.

And it's often lost on people just how big the Department is.

We spend £180 billion a year – equivalent to the whole economy of a country the size of Portugal.

We see around 80,000 people a day in jobcentres.

We make 12 million payments a week – for pensions, welfare, child care and more.

We rely on 78,000 staff.

It is a Department I know well, having started here in 2010.

Interestingly, I'm the only Minister I believe who has spent their whole Ministerial career in one department- Work and Pensions – moving from Parliamentary Private Secretary into a Junior Minister role to a Minister of State to now Secretary of State – even with a spell of unemployment in the middle!

And don't think that irony wasn't lost on me – when, standing on stage at 5am on a May morning in 2015, surrounded by cameras, lights, people, and hearing the election result that I'd lost.

One moment Minister of State for Employment the next moment unemployed!

So I'm delighted to be back here as Secretary of State.

Working with my excellent team of Ministers who I'd like to thank for their dedication, commitment and incredible hard work: Sarah Newton, Alok Sharma, Guy Opperman, Justin Tomlinson and Peta Buscombe, along with our excellent PPSs Rebecca Pow and Julian Knight and whip Craig Whittaker.

I also want to extend a massive thanks to all of the DWP's committed staff across the country.

We have put the Conservative approach to welfare into practice. This, alongside sound, Conservative, economic policies, means we are delivering an employment revolution.

Guiding the country out of Labour's mess. Let's not forget under Labour the number of households where no one had ever worked almost doubled.

In stark contrast, since 2010 we have added on average 1,000 more jobs each and every day – and despite what the Labour Party say, the vast majority of these are full-time permanent roles.

We have created more new jobs in the UK since 2010, than France, Spain, Ireland, Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and Norway combined.

In fact it would take me over a month to read out non-stop all the names of those we've helped into work... so I hope you're all sitting comfortably!!

And youth unemployment has plummeted by almost 50 percent – whereas in Spain and Italy it is almost three times higher. Making us the envy of Europe.

However it's about more than just numbers.

We are helping people take control of their lives. And we are transforming the country into a great working nation, prepared for a prosperous, post-Brexit future.

And it is the Conservatives who have redesigned the welfare system to make it fit for the 21st Century. The vision of Iain Duncan Smith.

We have ditched Labour's confusing mix of benefits and tax credits. They stifled opportunities to work by creating punitive, effective tax rates of over 90 per cent.

And we have eradicated the bureaucracy which meant people had to apply to three organisations for welfare: HMRC for tax credits, local authorities for housing benefit and DWP for unemployment benefits and disability payments.

Universal Credit is an up-to-date system that replaces 6 benefits with one monthly payment and ensures that work always pays. This is why Labour hate it so much.

We are helping people into work and up the career ladder. The Conservative ladder of opportunity.

Our employment success hasn't happened by accident, just like Labour's failures haven't either.

Since becoming Secretary of State in January, I have listened to the concerns of claimants, constituents, charities, welfare organisations and colleagues and I have made significant changes to the benefit system.

Including extra support for those with disabilities, more help for vulnerable young people and more support for families.

People spoke, I listened.

And we'll continue to improve the system where we can and work with independent organisations to deliver vital services.

Because the State cannot, and should not, work in isolation. It would be arrogant to suggest it can.

Which is why today, I can announce a new, national partnership with Citizens Advice to deliver Universal Support across the UK, worth £39 million from 2019. This will help the most vulnerable get timely access to Universal Credit, providing budgeting advice and developing their digital skills.

I want to continue to build partnerships with organisations across the country to help even more people into work.

So today I can announce that from the New Year we will work with Barnardo's to provide care leavers with work experience opportunities in Barnardo's high street shops. It will give that crucial, first step towards employment, all within a supportive, working environment, alongside trained staff and volunteers.

Over the years Barnardo's has transformed the lives of millions of children and families across the UK. They provide unconditional support, without judgement, giving the space, time and help for people to get back on their feet. So, as one of those children, and standing proud, thank you.

Conference, we are Compassionate Conservatives.

We care about the vulnerable in society and how to support them.

Yes we look after the money, yes we balance the books to ensure we can support those who need it, when they need it. But we are not a party only interested in numbers.

A sound economy is part of the picture; a cohesive, caring society is the other part.

If you were to believe everything you heard from Labour or read on social media you'd think we were somehow letting down the most vulnerable in society.

Especially disabled people.

However, those who say we are cutting budgets are peddling fake news.

So here's the real news –

We have never spent more on those with disabilities and long-term health conditions. We spend over £50 billion a year, up £9 billion on 2010.

But we want to do more than provide financial support, we want to help disabled people achieve their career ambitions and goals. In fact from 2013

to 2017 we've helped 600,000 more disabled people into work through personalised and tailored support.

And don't let history be rewritten – it was William Hague in a Conservative Government in 1995 who introduced the Disability Discrimination Act – to champion, support and hold up the values of a caring society.

It was the Conservatives who created 'Access to Work' – a scheme for disabled people to support them in the workplace.

And Conservatives who introduced 'Disability Confident' – a scheme I created and launched back in 2013 – designed to help businesses recruit, and retain disabled people and those with health conditions, and which now has over 7,500 businesses signed up to it. We are also creating 3 additional Sector Champions responsible for – website accessibility, product design and countryside & heritage, to amplify the voice of disabled people. This is the Conservative approach to assisting those with disabilities.

And we support Pensioners who have worked their whole lives, and contributed enormously to the success of this country.

We are providing certainty in retirement through the state pension, which has increased by £1,450 per pensioner since 2010. In sharp contrast to the 75p increase pensioners received under Labour in 2000 – remember that?

And we will continue to protect UK pensioners living in the EU post-Brexit by applying the triple lock as we do here.

At the same time we are delivering a private pensions revolution. More people than ever are saving into a work place pension up nearly 50 percent in the last 6 years, and significantly driven by younger people. Through automatic-enrolment, we have helped create almost 10 million new pension savers.

And we will be giving people the opportunity to access their pension information through an industry led pension dashboard, building on the government's check your state pension online service.

We are opening up opportunities for all, through our welfare, employment and pensions reforms.

Only the Conservative Government have a track record of success in these critical areas.

We are here to give a hand up, and not a hand out.

We are the party of opportunity and social mobility.

These values unite us all.

They will also be the guiding light for our exciting post-Brexit future with a Conservative Government.

A UK which is working like never before and open to business.

An inclusive nation – with opportunity for all.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.

Gavin Williamson speech to Conservative Party Conference 2018

Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Defence, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference at The ICC, Birmingham, said:

(Check against delivery)

Introduction

“Tom thanks for that introduction.

You are doing an excellent job as President of the National Convention, and you have my thanks.

Conference, it is a great pleasure to be here in Birmingham.

This city with its great industrial past has strong links with the Royal Navy – despite being 75 miles from the sea!

Three of our nation’s great ships have proudly borne the name Birmingham.

Those ships won five battle honours.

And today to continue this proud tradition

I am pleased to announce that we will be naming one of our eight Type 26 global combat ships, HMS Birmingham.

I inherited a Ministry of Defence that had been brilliantly manned by my predecessors – Liam Fox, Philip Hammond and Michael Fallon.

My thanks goes to them for building such an effective force.

Today, Mark Lancaster, Tobias Ellwood, Stuart Andrew, Freddie Howe and our PPSs’ Will Quince, Jack Lopresti and Trudy Harrison are a fantastic Defence team.

And special thanks must go to Philip Dunne MP for the great review he did on prosperity and defence this year.

Since I joined in November it's been quite the year.

There have been ups,

and there have been downs...

There have been times when I have spoken a little bluntly,

But, then us Yorkshire folk have never been known for our subtlety.

This year there have been challenges abroad and at home, with our nation's enemies always testing our preparedness and our resolve.

When I visit troops in Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia and around the world, I see first-hand the passion, the commitment, and the dedication of our people.

You cannot help but be in awe of the challenges they face.

We owe them a great debt.

Today, I want to speak to you about caring for those people who have served,

About the young people who have been inspired by our armed forces,

And, about what our armed forces do every single day to keep us all safe.

Veterans

As Conservatives, we all believe that we should care for everyone in society, especially the most vulnerable.

We want to look after all of those in the services, including those who suffer from chronic conditions, mental health issues and disability.

So today, I am pleased to announce a new support network for them.

And, we want the families and loved ones who support their partner in the services to have every chance to succeed.

So, I am pleased to announce a new scheme to help service personnel's partners find the jobs they want.

And alongside this we will provide more training and educational opportunities for the armed forces.

And, when the time comes and our people choose to move on we will help them to continue to achieve their true potential.

A new Veterans Transition Policy will deliver this.

We will help service leavers to manage their finances, gain the right

qualifications for the workplace, and help them to find housing.

We will set them up for success. Because they deserve it.

And more than this we want to celebrate everything they have done to keep our families and communities safe.

So we will introduce the new Veterans ID Card for all our service leavers.

It will give them the recognition they deserve.

And help them if they ever need to seek support for housing, health or work.

This is about making sure we look after all our service personnel from the moment they join, whilst they serve and after they leave.

Cadets

As Conservatives, we also understand that everyone should have the opportunity to succeed in life, regardless of background or gender.

Let me tell you a little bit about what I mean.

Recently I went to a cadet unit in West Bromwich.

The Head Teacher told me at first the young people who joined the cadets were reluctant to wear their naval uniforms at school.

Two weeks later, they were proudly wearing their uniforms.

They were proud to belong to something bigger than themselves.

On Friday, I visited a local air cadet unit at Aston University Engineering Academy.

The young cadet Flight Sergeant who showed me round said to me being part of the cadets is like being part of a family

He was building friendships, gaining confidence, a sense of adventure and having fun.

And, thanks to the Conservatives in Government there are now 170 more cadet units and currently 43,000 cadets in schools.

I want to build on this and give even more young people the opportunity to join the cadets.

So today, I am setting a new ambition to increase the number of cadets in

schools from 43,000 to 60,000 cadets.

And, each year we will celebrate our cadets with a new a national Cadet Week.

This will be a chance for us all to come together to see everything our young people gain in the cadets.

We teach them new skills vital to succeeding in today's world – where being savvy online and protecting against cyberattacks are essential

So, I am pleased to launch a new Cyber Security Training Programme for our cadets.

This Programme has been designed with GCHQ and the National Cyber Security Centre.

2,000 cadets a year will be trained in cyber security.

Teaching young people skills, they need to succeed in today's world.

This investment in cadets is an investment in the future of our young people.

Conference, this is an investment in all our futures.

Our armed forces

This Conservative Party understands the value of our armed forces, who keep us all safe.

We know that we have the best in the world.

They can react rapidly, taking the fight to the most capable of enemies whether by land, sea, air, cyber or space.

They can deploy and use complex weapons and maintain the ultimate guarantee of our safety, the nuclear deterrent.

Every day of every year, our armed forces are serving around the world.

With 10,000 personnel on 30 operations stationed in 23 countries, and over 20,000 people held at High Readiness.

We are a leader in NATO, where we meet the pledge to spend at least 2 per cent of GDP on Defence.

Earlier this year it was thanks to the Royal Navy that Britain was the first nation to enforce United Nation's maritime sanctions against North Korea.

We have seen HMS Sutherland and HMS Albion,

alongside our allies,

active in promoting Global Britain,

upholding the rules-based international order,

and protecting our rights to sail in international waters in the South China Sea.

For the first time this week state of the art Lightning fighters took off from the decks of the world's most advanced aircraft carrier -HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Conference, it was our armed forces who cleaned-up the nerve agent after the attack in Salisbury.

And, this Conservative Party understands the importance of the armed forces.

We launched the Modernising Defence Programme earlier this year.

To make sure our armed forces can protect us now and into the future.

It is about having the right armed forces to protect your children, to protect my children and, to protect our nation into the future.

That is why we continue to invest.

This year we unveiled our new lethal, sophisticated, jet fighter concept, Tempest.

In March, the Prime Minister committed £600 million to protect our nuclear deterrent.

And, we continue to invest in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Combined...they have a glorious past of seemingly achieving the impossible, whether that was seizing the Rock of Gibraltar over 300 years ago...

or seizing the Al Faw peninsula more recently in Iraq.

To deliver the seemingly impossible they need to be able to bring the fight from the sea to the land.

As such, I am happy to confirm that I am protecting their vital landing platforms, HMS Albion and HMS Bulwark

We need them for today, tomorrow and into the future.

The armed forces protect our prosperity and security.

Something the Leader of the Opposition fails to understand,

Think about it Conference.

Which is the scarier thought?

Trusting Jeremy Corbyn with your prosperity?

Or

Trusting Jeremy Corbyn with your security?

Our armed forces give us so much.

In July, I remember watching the fly past over London as the RAF celebrated their 100 years.

Ten of thousands of people came to see it, but, also to say thank you for all they have done keeping us safe

It made us all feel proud to be British.

And this year on the 100th anniversary of the Great War we should remember the sacrifice of those who have paid the ultimate price to give us the freedoms that we enjoy today.

In the 1980s it was Margaret Thatcher who ignited the flame of freedom, liberty and hope, across Eastern Europe.

Today, it is our duty to ensure that flame continues to burn.

We have, and always will stand by our friends and NATO allies, as they have so often stood with us in the face of increasing threats.

We will not just talk about our values

We will defend them

And, we will not let the Kremlin rewrite the outcome of the Cold War.

But, Conference the challenges are growing.

The threat

Iran is increasingly dangerous.

North Korea has nuclear weapons.

And there is a blurring of boundaries as our enemies operate in the 'grey zone' with cyber-attacks and fake news.

One of the greatest threats we face is Russia.

Two weeks ago, I stood on the frontline in Ukraine.

I saw the devastation caused by Russian artillery shells and missiles as they try to seize territory which is not theirs.

Beyond Ukraine, in the Arctic and High North, Russia is increasing their military presence.

As the ice melts, new shipping routes emerge and the significance of this region increases.

As highlighted by my colleague Julian Lewis and the Defence Select Committee we need to protect our national interests.

Russia is increasing their military activity in the Arctic,

With more submarines operating increasingly under the ice,

With ambitions to build over 100 facilities in the Arctic,

And, with the reopening of old Soviet bases.

To deal with this we will launch our Defence Arctic Strategy.

Our Poseidon aircraft submarine hunters, based in Lossiemouth, will track Russian submarines.

They will keep us safe at home and assist our NATO allies.

And we will step-up our training with our Norwegian friends,

With 800 Royal Marines training each year in Norway.

Our submarines will operate under the ice shelf in support of them.

And, the RAF will protect the skies over the Baltic and Iceland.

It is our range of cutting edge capabilities that make Great Britain one of the world's leading military powers.

Beyond the High North and Arctic we must be ready, and must show that we are ready, to deal with threats as they emerge.

We are increasing our British points of presence around the globe.

We will not close our key facilities in Germany

Instead we keep them open and forward base Army units there.

This year in the Gulf, we opened the first naval base east of the Suez since the 1960s.

And will permanently base minehunters and one of our frigates there.

They are projecting British influence and protecting Britain's interests – they make us a truly Global Britain.

Concluding remarks

Conference, I am proud of the work our armed forces do, they are world-leading and made up of inspiring men and women.

Our armed forces have a proud history of protecting the values we hold so dear and of keeping us all safe.

We are at a crossroads – this is the time to step forward.

We are proud of our nation's history.

Now we must be confident in our future.

We are the Party that understand it is our armed forces who always give us so much, who represent our values as a nation, who never pause or hesitate to come to our defence when we need it most.

So, Conference, we Conservatives prize our armed forces

They defend us

So we will defend them

They protect us

So we will protect them

It is the Conservative and Unionist Party that will give Great Britain the confidence, belief and hope to take our nation to ever greater heights.

It is us, all of us, who will build a Great and Global Britain.”

ENDS

For further information, please contact the Press Office on 020 7984 8121.