

News story: Joint release by the UK International Trade Secretary and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer

During the meeting, both Ministers committed to strengthen economic links between the UK and U.S., including a discussion about the possibility of laying the groundwork for a potential new trade agreement soon after Brexit.

The visit marks the first international trip for the UK International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, since the UK general election.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

Our work as an international economic department has never been more critical and I am delighted to be making my first visit back as International Trade Secretary to the US, which is our largest single trading partner, accounting for a fifth of all exports.

Our valuable talks underlined the shared interest in forging a closer trade and economic relationship including making progress on policy coordination, regulatory issues and expanding trade and investment between our economies.

As our largest single trading partner, we have a strong foundation to build on as we start preparation on joint work to explore a future ambitious trade agreement once the UK has left the EU.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said:

It's a pleasure to welcome Secretary of State Fox to the United States, as we meet for the first time to build an even stronger relationship between our two countries. As the United States' fifth largest export market, the United Kingdom is an invaluable trading partner.

As UK negotiations with the European Union begin, I look forward to working with Dr. Fox and the United States Congress to lay the groundwork for our future trade relationship, including exploring the possibility of a new U.S.-UK trade agreement. In the meantime, the United States is committed to continuing discussions for improving trade and investment and coordinating on addressing

global excess capacity issues.

Trade between the 2 countries is already worth about \$230 billion a year, the U.S. is the single biggest source of inward investment into the UK, and together there is around \$1 trillion invested in each other's economies.

Press release: Dr Liam Fox travels to US on first international trade visit since the General Election

There he will meet a Congressional delegation on Capitol Hill to explore ways to deepen trade and economic links between the UK and US, with the potential of signing a Free Trade Agreement soon after Brexit.

Trade between the 2 countries is already worth over £150 billion a year, the US is the single biggest source of inward investment into the UK, and together there is around \$1 trillion invested in each other's economies.

As part of the 2-day visit, Dr Fox will meet Ambassador Robert Lighthizer, US Trade Representative, as well as the US Chamber of Commerce, trade policy organisations and business representatives.

The International Trade Secretary will also attend the 'Select USA Investment Summit' at the National Convention Center, where he will deliver a speech setting out the principles of free trade.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

Our work as an international economic department has never been more critical and I am delighted to be making my first visit back as International Trade Secretary to the US, which is our largest single trading partner, accounting for a fifth of all exports.

We know we have a very big job to do, but we also know there are very big opportunities out there for the UK in terms of making a success out of global Britain and championing free trade which is fundamental to the prosperity of the world economy.

This visit will also help lay the groundwork for a potential future UK-US free trade agreement and the practical steps we can take now

in order to enable companies in both countries to trade and do business with one another more easily.

The visit will underline the shared interest in forging a closer trade and economic relationship including making progress on policy coordination, regulatory issues and market access barriers.

Dr Fox previously met Paul Ryan, Speaker of the US House of Representatives, and a US Congressional delegation to discuss trade links, in London in April earlier this year.

We deserve to hear the truth behind Theresa May's Brexit talks

This time last year I was campaigning hard for Britain to remain in the EU. Twelve months on, and not only have we been through a referendum when voters chose to leave the EU, we have a different Prime Minister who is now hanging on to her job by a thread.

It has been an extraordinary period of upheaval in British politics.

This week, the Brexit talks got under way but we still have no idea what the final outcome will be.

Theresa May was intent on a hard Brexit, yet her authority has been crushed after a general election which saw her lose her majority. Her vision of an extreme Brexit has been rejected.

Jeremy Corbyn is assembling a government in waiting at Westminster, and the formidable Keir Starmer is leading our constructive approach to Brexit.

He has made clear to the Prime Minister that she must take a different tone and approach, and be much clearer about the benefits of the single market and the customs union. And she has to be clear about how she's going to allow Parliament to have a much greater role in scrutiny as we go through the process of leaving the EU.

Alternatively, she could step aside and let Labour guide us through the process instead.

We want to scrap the Conservatives' Brexit White Paper and replace it with fresh negotiating priorities that have a strong emphasis on retaining the benefits of the single market and the customs union – which are essential for maintaining industries, jobs and businesses in Britain.

Labour will always put jobs and the economy first.

The outcome of the Brexit talks will have major ramifications for Scotland. Nicola Sturgeon is quietly hoping it is a disaster – anything to build up a fresh grievance for her campaign for independence. She doesn't care much about getting a good deal.

The UK Government should be transparent and open as talks get under way, and that includes involving opposition politicians and devolved administrations.

The Welsh Labour Government are committed to making the process work for the entire UK, unlike Sturgeon. That's why she must first publicly remove a second independence referendum from the table.

The outcome of Brexit should not be used by the SNP to demand a second vote. Even Sturgeon must see that it makes no sense to ask to join the UK negotiating team at the same time as calling for a vote to leave the UK.

As there are demands for a cross-party Brexit team, similarly the First Minister should meet with opposition parties prior to each negotiation meeting to ensure she presents the broad view of the Scottish Parliament, not just of the SNP.

And she should report back to other parties and to Parliament about how she's got on. What she claims other people said can no longer be trusted, so the negotiations must be open, transparent and properly recorded so we can see the whole picture.

We are embarking on a pivotal moment in our country's history. My fear is that May and Sturgeon are not up to the job.

This article first appeared in Kezia Dugdale's Daily Record column on Tuesday 20 June 2017

[News story: New Gateway will help veterans get support on civvy street](#)

Backed by £2 million from the Ministry of Defence's Covenant Fund, ['Veterans' Gateway'](#) is designed to help former Servicemen and women of all ages and backgrounds navigate their new lives as civilians.

From advice on housing and finance to help with health concerns, the Gateway will bring together the vast range of charities and support on offer, guiding veterans directly to the help they need, when and where they need it.

The new 24-hour online chat, phone, and text message service brings the Armed Forces support community together in a single place for the first time –

delivered by a Royal British Legion-led consortium with Poppyscotland, Combat Stress, Connect Assist, the Ministry of Defence and SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity. The service centre, based near Cardiff in South Wales, is manned partly by veterans to help ensure that callers can speak to someone who can understand their experience.

Tobias Ellwood, Minister for Defence People and Veterans said:

The vast majority of our people make a smooth transition from military to civilian life, but the Veterans' Gateway provides extra support in the form of a staffed, 24-hour, one-stop-shop offering guidance on housing and employment, finance, mental and physical health. Our £2 million investment honours the nation's Armed Forces Covenant and draws all facets of support for our Armed Forces community together for the first time.

Charles Byrne, Director General of The Royal British Legion, on behalf of the Veterans' Gateway consortium said:

Every charity only exists to help, but Lord Ashcroft revealed the uncomfortable truth that a proliferation of providers in our sector can cause confusion about where to turn. The consortium's research found that the Armed Forces community – overwhelmingly – supports the Veterans' Gateway, with 83 per cent welcoming the creation of a first point of contact. Veterans' Gateway will make it easier for them to get the support they need, from whoever is best able to provide it. No matter how complex their needs, working together we can do more.

Veterans' Gateway has been established in response to Lord Ashcroft's 2014 [Veterans' Transition Review](#), which called for the process by which veterans are guided to welfare support services to be made easier to navigate. It honours the Armed Forces Covenant – a pledge, enshrined in law, that former and current members of our armed forces, and their families, should suffer no disadvantage because of their service to our nation. To contact Veterans' Gateway Call: 0808 802 1212 Text: 81212 or visit: <http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>

[News story: New Gateway will help veterans get support on civvy street](#)

Backed by £2 million from the Ministry of Defence's Covenant Fund, ['Veterans'](#)

[Gateway'](#) is designed to help former Servicemen and women of all ages and backgrounds navigate their new lives as civilians.

From advice on housing and finance to help with health concerns, the Gateway will bring together the vast range of charities and support on offer, guiding veterans directly to the help they need, when and where they need it.

[Veterans' Gateway](#)

The new 24-hour online chat, phone, and text message service brings the Armed Forces support community together in a single place for the first time – delivered by a Royal British Legion-led consortium with Poppyscotland, Combat Stress, Connect Assist, the Ministry of Defence and SSAFA, the Armed Forces Charity. The service centre, based near Cardiff in South Wales, is manned partly by veterans to help ensure that callers can speak to someone who can understand their experience.

Tobias Ellwood, Minister for Defence People and Veterans said:

The vast majority of our people make a smooth transition from military to civilian life, but the Veterans' Gateway provides extra support in the form of a staffed, 24-hour, one-stop-shop offering guidance on housing and employment, finance, mental and physical health. Our £2 million investment honours the nation's Armed Forces Covenant and draws all facets of support for our Armed Forces community together for the first time.

Charles Byrne, Director General of The Royal British Legion, on behalf of the Veterans' Gateway consortium said:

Every charity only exists to help, but Lord Ashcroft revealed the uncomfortable truth that a proliferation of providers in our sector can cause confusion about where to turn. The consortium's research found that the Armed Forces community – overwhelmingly – supports the Veterans' Gateway, with 83 per cent welcoming the creation of a first point of contact. Veterans' Gateway will make it easier for them to get the support they need, from whoever is best able to provide it. No matter how complex their needs, working together we can do more.

Veterans' Gateway has been established in response to Lord Ashcroft's 2014 [Veterans' Transition Review](#), which called for the process by which veterans are guided to welfare support services to be made easier to navigate. It honours the Armed Forces Covenant – a pledge, enshrined in law, that former and current members of our armed forces, and their families, should suffer no disadvantage because of their service to our nation.

To contact Veterans' Gateway Call: 0808 802 1212 Text: 81212 or visit:
<http://www.veteransgateway.org.uk>