

Speech: International Trade Secretary at Security and Policing Exhibition

I would like to welcome the many international delegations who are joining us at today's Security and Policing Show – more than 40, I believe – as well as Mark Goldsack, my Department's new Director of our Defence and Security Organisation.

And thank you to the Home Office's Joint Resilience and Security Centre, and ADS for organising such a successful event yet again this year.

The UK's security industry is one of the strongest and most innovative in the world. It is one of our most diverse sectors in terms of both capabilities and application.

You are experts in a wide-range of areas, including scanning, trace detection and anti-theft systems. We are one of the top three nations for cyber-security solutions globally. And we are renowned the world over for our expertise in securing public spaces, building on our experiences at London 2012 and elsewhere – thanks for your efforts.

Your innovation, design, heritage and expertise are second to none.

I sometimes get asked: "What does Britain actually make now?" I've no doubt many of you have heard the same thing. I have to point out that we export a huge variety of commodities. In the year to December 2018, we sold £33.3 billion-worth of cars, £24.7 billion of medicinal and pharmaceutical products, and £24.7 billion of mechanical power generator products—from aircraft engines to gas turbines, and from steam generators to nuclear reactors. So much for Britain not producing anything any more; we are actually experiencing a renaissance in manufacturing in this country.

At the Department for International Trade, we also get the little brother of that: "What does Britain actually export?" Again, I tell them that we have an excellent economic success story to tell. Between 2010 and 2018, exports have grown by 40.8%, around 5% per year on average, driven by an increase in services exports of 55.2%.

Exports of goods and services in the year to December 2018 were worth almost £630 billion.

In addition to our world-class goods exports, we are also the world's second largest services exporter. In the year to September 2018, we sold some £82.4 billion-worth of business services, almost £61 billion of financial services and nearly £38 billion of travel services. Here, across the sectors, the UK has huge comparative advantage. Services account for almost half of all our exports—42.4% going to the EU and 57.6% to non-EU countries.

This sector is a great example of why such questions fail to understand our national success.

The statistics are clear. The United Kingdom is the world's second-largest defence exporter; the third-largest aerospace exporter and a producer of 40% of the world's small satellites.

At the Department of International Trade we have been doing our part to further strengthen that success, providing support to UK companies to help them get started and expand their footprint in global markets.

This year alone, the department has supported over 140 export wins.

For example, we have recently helped a Lincolnshire based security systems innovator, Concept Smoke Screen, to secure a £17.5 million contract to export anti-theft fogging systems to Brazil's banking sector.

Or there is Herefordshire based Silent Sentinel, who have recently sold £2.5 million of surveillance equipment into Poland.

In terms of cyber we have exporters such as Garrison, developers of one of the world's most secure commercial internet browsing technologies, who have recently secured major deals in Germany and the United States. It is success stories like these that underpin hundreds of thousands of high-skilled manufacturing jobs, allowing people to support their families right across the country.

This sector plays a vital role in the UK's prosperity: totalling some £4.8 billion of our exports – and it continues to grow.

But it also plays a wider role: creating the products and services which promote global stability in a very direct way, by sharing the means of security and policing with our friends and allies, and, in the final analysis, saving lives.

I am sure you don't need me to tell you that we are at a pivotal time in British history. As we prepare to leave the European Union, Brexit is predictably consuming much of the Government's attention – and a lot of our political bandwidth.

In terms of my department's own responsibilities, our main priority is making sure that we transition the trade agreements the EU has with third countries, and that our trade regime works operationally on day one, in any scenario.

For the Government as a whole the priority is, of course, securing an agreement that the EU and the House of Commons can both agree to.

While I cannot tell you exactly what the outcome of those discussions will be, I can tell you that it is the Government's firm intention for you to have continued access to European markets and supply chains, and to provide certainty for businesses and individuals as we move towards our future deep and special partnership with the EU.

But I would also like to highlight the fact that there is a world beyond Europe and there will be a time beyond Brexit.

While people often think of International Trade as a 'Brexit department', about 90% of our staff work on trade and investment promotion.

Around 130 of those are in the Defence and Security Organisation, our largest sector team by a wide margin, alongside a separate team for civil aerospace.

We recently launched our first ever space exports campaign. And we are making renewed efforts to focus on our cyber security sector, which is driving much of the growth in our exports.

Last April we launched a specific Cyber Security Export Strategy, based on the benefits of trade prosperity and our own national security, and I am glad to see so many representatives from companies in that area here this evening.

Some of you may also have been involved in the work we have been doing to develop a revised Security Exports Strategy, which we hope to publish soon.

It will set out our ambitions to support the industry, working in partnership with other departments, the Government's innovation programmes and trade associations to provide greater levels of support to ensure that the UK's exports in this important sector continue to grow.

This work, in turn, forms part of our wider Export Strategy that was published in August 2018. It is informed by extensive engagement with businesses and business organisations across all parts of the UK.

One of the things we identified in that Strategy was that the Government needed to concentrate our support on where we could make the most difference... .. ensuring no viable export fails for lack of finance or insurance – through our world-class export credit agency UK Export Finance... .. connecting businesses with local markets and addressing barriers to trade... .. informing business about overseas markets, giving them the knowledge they need about local business cultures, regulations, or consumer needs – including the development of great.gov.uk as a one-stop advisory shop...

... and encouraging firms to export through targeted support and in setting up a network of Export Champions – businesses who have successfully exported, and have the credibility to mentor others to do the same.

No-one is better-placed than the Government to talk to other Governments – something that is important to many of you here.

Many of you count foreign Governments as key customers. Even more of you count the British Government as a key customer.

Many of you operate in heavily-regulated areas, where Government-to-Government conversations can make a real difference; helping to connect businesses, opening markets and unlocking opportunities overseas.

And I am delighted to be able to add to that support this evening. Just before speaking to you, I signed an agreement with Sir Kevin Tebbitt, the Chairman of RISC.

This document formalises the efforts we have made with RISC and the many trade bodies that they represent over the last year to strengthen our mutual support for the sector, and we will be setting out our plans for this in more detail in the forthcoming Security Export Strategy.

The Security sector is one of the most adaptable and responsive industries in our country: rising again and again to the challenges posed to our safety and security.

And it needs to be, given the ever-evolving nature of the security challenges we face: whether it be cyber security solutions to protect our data, innovative ways to manage crowded places, or in preventing disruption at large transport hubs.

But I am confident that it is this very adaptability and responsiveness which will underpin your future success and continue to drive our international exports.

The mission of my department – to build a future for the UK's international trade that supports our prosperity, secures our stability and guarantees our security – is a vital one and it is complemented by the efforts of everyone in this room.

Britain stands on the brink of a new era in our trading history, continuing our close cooperation with our partners in European Union while reaching out to friends old and new in the wider world, from which 90% of global growth is expected to originate in the next five years.

Our mission is to open new markets, build new trade and investment opportunities and to use these to underpin the Government's agenda for a truly Global Britain.

It is a vital mission: and it is one I very much look forward to advancing in partnership with this sector in the year to come. Thank you.