

Speech: Liam Fox celebrates the UK and China's shared commitment to innovation

Thank you all for being here tonight.

This evening is an opportunity for Britain and China to come together. A chance to identify our shared ambitions, our mutual strengths and the opportunities we have to work together to shape the future of global trade.

But, first and foremost, we are here tonight to celebrate the upcoming [GREAT Festival of Innovation](#).

The festival, which will take place in March just a few miles away in Hong Kong, will bring together some of the UK and Asia's most pioneering companies.

It will be a gathering like no other – an opportunity to share innovations that will drive the future of free trade and for businesses to build lifelong partnerships.

It is this spirit of friendship and commonality that I wish to speak to you about tonight.

It is fitting that this evening we are gathered in Shenzhen, a city with innovation in its DNA.

Shenzhen, as the technological capital of China, is the engine room that will power China in the age of the fourth industrial revolution.

In a matter of decades, Shenzhen has transformed from a small fishing village into a dynamic and youthful city with a population of more than 11 million.

Much of this success has been down to this city's dynamism, and its dedication to technical advancement.

With research and development investment accounting for 4% of GDP – double the national average – and patent applications standing at the highest in China for 10 consecutive years, it cannot be denied that we stand in a city that is unapologetically focused on the future.

Across this city, some of the world's most talented minds are coming together to design tomorrow's technology.

Shenzhen is a world-leading producer of drones, electric cars and DNA sequencing machines.

It is clear that this city has much to offer the world.

But I am here this evening to talk about what the United Kingdom can offer Shenzhen.

Yesterday, I had several hours of constructive and positive talks with Commerce Minister Zhong Shan where we discussed the opportunities that result from the complementary nature of our economies.

Technology is clearly one but there are others. Another lies in food and drink.

China will need to ensure that there is a sufficient supply of quality foodstuffs available for its growing population and especially its burgeoning middle class.

Britain will want to ensure better and more predictable incomes for our farmers as we leave the EU so that we can attract investment and improve productivity.

We must work together in the months ahead to ensure that we address any concerns that Chinese authorities have so that the Chinese people can enjoy the benefits that quality UK beef, lamb and poultry can bring. Our already growing exports of food and drink can improve further with the lifting of market access barriers.

There is a great opportunity to be ambitious about our future trading relationship to the benefit of both sides. We will continue to explore all our options together.

When the UK voted in 2016 to leave the European Union, there were many around the world that portrayed the result as a symptom of insularity.

They predicted that Britain would be turning in on itself, abdicating its international responsibilities and severing global ties.

I am here to tell you that nothing could be further from the truth.

Instead, last year's referendum vote to leave the European Union has offered us an unprecedented opportunity.

For the first time in more than 4 decades, we have the opportunity to forge new trading partnerships around the world, with old friends and new allies alike.

We are building a Global Britain – a country that champions commercial freedoms, prizes international talent, and helps the world's most dynamic and innovative enterprises to reach their potential.

We want to see companies, like those that join us today, succeed. We want to see Shenzhen succeed.

As shown by figures from the Shenzhen Statistics Bureau, UK-Shenzhen trade is already worth more than US\$6 billion a year and the UK is the largest EU source of Foreign Direct Investment to the city – with investments totalling

around US\$1.4 billion.

Likewise, the innovative firms that have made Shenzhen their home are growing their businesses in the UK, with Huawei alone employing more than 1,500 staff across the UK.

The UK and Shenzhen share common strengths. Fintech, information and communications technology, advanced healthcare, artificial intelligence, advanced manufacturing and clean energy are all industries in which we are both seeking to blaze a trail.

These areas of commonality mean opportunities for our businesses. Opportunities for UK and Chinese firms of all sizes to trade with one another, to share expertise and to secure investment.

Indeed this evening we're very lucky to be joined by some of the excellent British food and drink manufacturers who are meeting the growing demand from Chinese consumers. If you haven't done so already I would urge you to sample the delicious products being showcased today, including smoked salmon from H. Forman & Son, cider from Brothers, cheese from Somerdale, and ale from Badger.

In 2016 China became the ninth largest importer of British food and drink and early figures for 2017 show a move to eighth place.

Tonight, and all through the Great Festival of Innovation, we come together to fortify our bonds and fundamentally to support one another to achieve our ambitions.

Britain's decision to leave the European Union is our acknowledgement that our destiny lies not only in our valued friendship with Europe, but also the wider world.

Earlier I quoted some rather impressive statistics relating to UK-Shenzhen trade and investment. These figures, while heartening, fail to show the real impact and value of trade.

Trade and investment creates jobs, supports the livelihoods of real people, means the food and clothes that we buy in the shops are more affordable and that businesses can grow and thrive.

In short, it means for us a more prosperous Britain and a more secure world.

That is why, far from retreating from the world, we are extending the hand of friendship beyond the borders of Europe.

Being a globally minded country is in our very nature. We are in the right time zone to trade with Asia in the morning and America in the afternoon. We champion business-friendly regulation, are home to the world's leading financial sector, are the number one destination for inward investment in Europe and boast some of the world's best universities that bring students from across the world together.

In the first full year since the referendum we saw the highest number of foreign direct investment projects into the United Kingdom in our history, a 13.5% rise in our exports and record employment. A vote of confidence from global investors.

Last year our government launched a modern [industrial strategy](#) for the United Kingdom. It is a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK.

It focuses on the 5 foundations of productivity: ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places.

The strategy sets out how we are building a Britain fit for the future and how we will respond to the technological revolution taking place across the world.

Technology will disrupt nearly every sector in every country, creating new opportunities and challenges.

We, like our partners in Shenzhen, are focused on seizing these opportunities. From the data-driven economy to the future of mobility, we want to back visionary businesses to make their mark.

As you will see there are many parallels between the United Kingdom's modern Industrial Strategy and the new area strategy for Guangdong.

We both share the ambition of supporting our industries to be world leaders in research, manufacturing, life sciences and high technology.

We also have a shared understanding of the vital role that transport and infrastructure play in driving productivity.

While of course there are many ways in which our worlds differ, it is impossible not to be struck by the commonality.

That is why I truly believe the UK and the Greater Bay Area can and should work together to achieve these great aims and to be partners as we nurture innovation-driven economies.

The scale of opportunity for UK business to export to, partner with, and invest in this region is unrivalled.

My department, which is responsible for trade and investment, wants to offer more support to those UK companies who see China as their trading partner of the future, and to do more to engage with Chinese investors, encouraging them to take advantage of opportunities in the UK.

That is exactly why in March we will be hosting the GREAT Festival of Innovation in Hong Kong. I hope many of you will be there joining hundreds of other international business leaders and investors.

The festival will showcase the very best of British and Asian innovations in how we will learn, live, work and play in the future across multiple sectors.

It will be a meeting of brilliant minds. It will provide an opportunity for British and Asian visionaries to forge new trade links and strengthen existing relationships.

The event will be the third in a series of successful GREAT festivals in 5 years, following the success of the GREAT Festivals of Creativity in Istanbul in 2014 and Shanghai in 2015, with the latter generating over £800 million in business.

I look forward to welcoming you all to the festival, to join the most exciting, dynamic and successful companies that the Asian tech sector has to offer.

I hope this evening I have imparted some of the optimism that my colleagues and I feel at this juncture in our history. It is a new, exciting chapter for the United Kingdom, but also for our valued friendship with Shenzhen and China. The opportunities and the prizes of the future are there to be shared together.

Thank you.

[News story: UK healthcare education and training in high demand in China](#)

Matching the healthcare needs of growing, ageing populations with the right supply of trained health professionals is a challenge for both the UK and China.

The emphasis on collaboration and healthcare professional training has allowed the UK to become a global expert in managing the shifting needs in healthcare. This has created a demand to educate and train other countries.

UK expertise in healthcare

The UK's system of healthcare education and training, especially in the NHS, ensures that healthcare professionals continually develop their skills.

In addition to this, the UK is especially adept at forging collaborations between public and private sector, academia and charities. This allows healthcare organisations to gain new skills and insight at a rapid pace.

This expertise has led to an extensive network of UK healthcare education and training providers who are ready to export their knowledge, skills and experience.

Healthcare UK has been reaching out to these businesses and organisations,

encouraging their export programmes and advising them where the greatest demand for their services lies.

There is a strong demand for education and training in China as the country looks to improve its healthcare services to an international standard, making them more able to cope with a growing and aging population.

Meeting the demand for healthcare

As evidence of and to help meet this demand, Healthcare UK recently prepared a mission to bring UK healthcare exporters to China. The mission was supported by the:

13 UK companies representing the best of NHS trusts, universities and private organisations introduced themselves and presented their healthcare education and training offer. These organisations included Alder Hey, Tavistock and Portman NHS trusts and London South Bank and West of Scotland Universities.

More than 250 representatives from Chinese government bodies, medical associations, and private and public hospitals in Beijing, Guangzhou and the surrounding regions met with these companies over the course of the mission..

Some companies also had more in-depth discussions with a range of Chinese representatives, including those from the Beijing Huatong Guokang Foundation (BHGF). This is a charity that supports Chinese organisations to organise overseas training ranging from a few weeks to a few months.

Healthcare UK signed an MOU with BHGF. Indeed, the NHS in particular is known in China as a global leader in healthcare expertise and patient safety, and the opportunities for NHS trusts to work with organisations in the region are excellent.

More opportunities for UK healthcare suppliers

There has never been a better time to do business between our 2 countries – this year marks the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the UK and China.

China's Healthy China 2030 plan that aims to reform the country's medical and health systems also delivers an increased demand for healthcare expertise in various areas.

The strong UK presence in the global healthcare education and training sector means opportunities for UK businesses to flourish in China, a trend we expect to see continuing in future years.

Contact us at healthcare.uk@trade.gov.uk for more information about UK healthcare education and training services and how we can assist your organisation in its exporting goals.

[News story: Royal Navy work with Australians on massive drug bust](#)

Parcels of seized narcotics lay on the deck of the smuggling vessel. Crown copyright.

Under the command of Combined Task Force (CTF)150, Royal Fleet Auxiliary (RFA) Fort Rosalie's Royal Navy Sea King Mark 7 helicopter spotted a suspicious boat while flying over the Arabian Sea, off the coast of Oman, this week.

Australian ship HMAS Warramunga – working with Fort Rosalie as part of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) – then intercepted it and found more than 3.5 tonnes of illicit substances, valued at £105million.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Thanks to the skill and professionalism of Britain's Armed Forces, working with key allies like the Australians, we are keeping our citizens safe by tackling the evil international drugs trade that funds terrorism.

I am incredibly grateful that we have the best service men and women in the world who always go the extra mile, whether they are protecting us from harm or saving precious wildlife like this family of turtles.

The Flight Commander, Lieutenant Commander Dan Breward Royal Navy said:

We're delighted to have been able to contribute to CTF 150's missions within the joint operations area. There was a massive effort from all parties involved from both Fort Rosalie and, ultimately, Warramunga.

As long as drugs and weapons continue to be trafficked to aid terrorism, we will be here with the coalition members to stop them; we have a track record that we aim to build upon.

In addition to the huge haul, RFA Fort Rosalie was also able to rescue three young Loggerhead Turtles that were caught in a huge mass of fishing nets drifting through the water. The baby turtles were freed by some delicate cutting from the team.

The Navigator, Second Officer Thorsten Brabetz, said:

It was not what we expected to find when we investigated the floats. It was great to be able to save the turtles and release them back into the sea. It was a real feel good moment for the boats crew and the entire ship.

In 2017, CMF ships have seized a total of 22.67 tonnes of narcotics. Boarding, search and seizure operations at sea require a persistent and methodical approach by CMF sailors and marines.

Press release: Maggie's Swansea is DVLA's Charity of Choice

Staff at the agency will take part in a wide range of fundraising events and activities throughout the coming year to raise money for the charity, which supports anyone in the Swansea and surrounding South Wales area affected by cancer.

Last year, DVLA handed over a cheque for over £50,000 to the charity Mind after a year packed full of fundraising efforts by its staff.

Fundraising activity in the previous year included members of staff skydiving, cycling from Paris to Swansea, taking part in a national '3 peaks challenge' and a team from DVLA entering the JCP Swansea Half Marathon. A 'Music for Mind concert' held by DVLA saw the staff choir performing show-stopping songs. Through the course of the year, staff also ran raffles, sweepstakes and cake sales, with every opportunity raising funds for the good cause.

On hearing the news Lucia Osmond, Centre Fundraising Manager for Maggie's Swansea, said:

The team at Maggie's Swansea is delighted to be DVLA's Charity of choice in 2018. As a local service we rely solely on the kindness and efforts of our supporters, so the funds raised in 2018 by the staff at DVLA will make a significant impact on the work we can continue to do for our service users in the local area.

Maggie's Swansea has worked with DVLA for some time, providing health awareness sessions and have supported many employees at Maggie's. So to have this official partnership is very exciting and we look forward to working with DVLA in the year to come.

Oliver Morley, DVLA Chief Executive added:

I'm immensely grateful to all our staff who really do rise to the challenge and give so much of their own time to raise thousands of pounds for our nominated charities. Together, with Maggie's Swansea we can make a huge difference and I'm delighted that we'll be working to support this terrific cause in 2018.

[News story: Defence Secretary praises UK efforts as RAF operations against Daesh continue](#)

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson meeting UK troops stationed in Taji who, along with over 600 British soldiers on the ground in Iraq, are helping to train Iraqi security forces. Crown copyright.

In his first visit to Iraq, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson praised UK service personnel as British airstrikes continue to wipe out Daesh.

RAF aircraft flew on operations against the terrorist group every day over the Christmas period, striking terrorist compounds, trucks, mortars and pockets of fighters engaged in close quarter, street fighting with Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The dangers we face are changing and are intensifying rapidly. Eliminating the threat from terrorism is critical to our security at home and abroad. Our brave Armed Forces are working tirelessly, day and night, to defeat Daesh after helping to recover significant territory in Iraq.

Only by defeating this evil and barbaric group for good will we reduce the deadly threat they pose to us, which is why we won't stop until their global network is destroyed.

RAF aircraft have carried out over 1,700 strikes against Daesh in Iraq and Syria since 2014 and in his first visit to Cyprus, Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson also met the crews who are playing a vital role in the coalition campaign to totally defeat Daesh.

Fast jets flying out of RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus and remotely piloted Reaper aircraft continue to provide support to the SDF on the ground who are clearing the last remaining pockets of Daesh terrorists in Eastern Syria.

Typhoons, Tornados and Reapers worked closely with coalition partners, offering vital intelligence and close air support throughout December, destroying Daesh targets near Abu Kamal, Abu Hardub and Abu Hammam.

He also visited UK personnel in Taji and Baghdad, as well as Kuwait, praising their efforts as part of the UK's contribution to the global coalition fight Daesh.

In Kuwait, he met with US Lieutenant General Paul Funk the Commanding General of the global coalition as well as Major General Felix Gedney, Deputy Commander-Strategy and Support and the most senior UK officer in the military campaign against Daesh.

They discussed the success of the military campaign in both Iraq and Syria, but also reflected that Daesh have not yet been defeated as pockets of fighters still remain and will continue to pose a threat at home and abroad.

In Baghdad, Mr Williamson met with the Iraqi Defence Minister and visited the Iraqi National Security Agency, commending the efforts of the Iraqi Security Forces and reiterating the UK's commitment to the long-term security and stability of Iraq. This follows from the Prime Minister's pledge in her recent visit to address the evolving threat from Daesh and countering the dispersal of foreign fighters as Daesh is squeezed out of the battlefield in Syria and Iraq

He also visited UK troops stationed in Taji who, along with over 600 British soldiers on the ground in Iraq, are helping to train that country's forces. UK troops have so far helped train around 60,000 Iraqi Security Forces in battle-winning infantry, counter-IED, engineering and combat medical skills. In addition to personnel on the ground in Iraq, the UK has provided over 1,400 military personnel from all three Services as part of its three year involvement.