

Davis: Facing the future

David

Davis MP, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, speaking today at

Conservative Party Conference in Manchester said:

**(Check
against delivery)**

“Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a great pleasure to be here in this great City, a city forever associated with free trade.

The historic buildings we see all around us, they were all built on the back of trade.

Today, I want to talk about how we can draw inspiration from that past, to carve out a new place for ourselves in the world, to rise to the new set of challenges that face us as new technologies threaten to change our world faster than ever.

When we met last year in the shadow of the Referendum emotions were still raw.

A year later, there is a new mood.

People want to look to the future.

They are fed up that people in Westminster seem to be stuck in an endless debate while the rest of the world wants to get a move on.

Over a year later I still get people coming up to me every day saying: ‘best of luck’ or ‘get a good deal for us Mr Davis’, and even, ‘Surely it can’t be that difficult?’

And that’s just the Cabinet.

Joking aside, every time I walk down the street, get on a train or walk through an airport...

People – not leave voters, or remain voters any more – just ordinary decent people, enthusiastically come up to me and wish me well on our shared project.

They know it's not going to be easy or straightforward.

But the reasons that so many men and women voted to leave a year and a half ago are the same reasons that drive me every day right now:

We have been given a one-off time-limited extraordinary opportunity.

An opportunity to make sure that all the decisions about the future of this country are taken by our parliament, our courts, our institutions.

Decisions about how to spend our taxes – made here in Britain.

Decisions about who comes into the country – made here in Britain.

All our laws – made here in Britain.

We need to get Britain standing on its own two feet – facing outwards to the world.

And it's that last point, looking forward to Britain's Global role, which I want to talk to you about now.

One of the most powerful arguments I've heard for being outside the European Union was simple.

And it goes like this:

'What kind of internationalism is it which says that this country must give priority to a Frenchman over an Indian, a German over an Australian, an Italian over a Malaysian.'

It couldn't have been further from a Conservative Conference.

Having been said by Barbara Castle in 1975.

But what she meant, rings true today.

We are a global nation. We export more goods and services than Russia, Brazil and Indonesia combined

We have one of the greatest armed forces on the planet...

Who show their worth to the world in the Indian

Ocean, in Iraq and the Baltics.

We train the best diplomats
and put them to the test by sending them to work for the Foreign Secretary.

Now that we are leaving the European Union.

It allows us to be more international, not less.

It requires us to face the world,
not looking away or glancing
back,
but with confidence and
determination about the future we will build.

And ladies and gentlemen
there is only one party which
can deliver that and it is our Conservative Party.

Now, I would be happy to work with the Labour Party
in the national interest, putting aside our differences for the good of the
country.

But they have been playing a different game.

They've now published 11 separate Brexit plans
and they are to paraphrase Tolstoy,
each unhappy in its own
unique way.

For the customs union...then against it

For the single market...then against it

For
freedom of movement...then against it

Where we have introduced a Repeal Bill to take
control of our laws and provide legal certainty...

They opposed it and offered no alternative.

Where we set out our negotiating positions and got
the process started...

They opposed it and offered no alternative.

Where we have set out a plan for life outside the
EU...with free trade and a strong economy...

They opposed it and offered no alternative.

They claim they respect the outcome of the
Referendum...

...but oppose every step required to deliver it.

This is the most complex negotiation you could imagine

Where one oversight, one error could cost the taxpayer billions of pounds...

And just last week I heard Keir Starmer say, 'We mustn't get bogged down in discussions about technicalities'

Well I'm afraid ignoring the details of Brexit just won't cut it.

It's like they've got a new slogan: 'Labour...government without the hard bits'.

Well we are different in this party

We respect the people's decision

And we will deliver the people's decision

And as we do it, we will have to be clear eyed about what we want to achieve.

Because the future of our country is much more than just Brexit.

And it is something to be excited about whether you voted leave or remain.

As Liam has just told you the European Commission itself says that 90 per cent of the future global growth will come from outside Europe.

Having an independent trade policy will allow us to embrace those opportunities to the full.

And it gives us an opportunity to lead a race to the top.

To push up global standards.

To protect rights for workers.

To improve productivity and increase wages.

And lead the world as the champion of free trade.

Campaigning for the poverty-busting, affluence-spreading, wealth-creating impact that it can have.

Last week I was in Brussels.

Representing Britain in the fourth round of negotiations

We are making real steps forwards getting results on issues which affect people's daily lives.

On the rights of British citizens in the Europe and European citizens here.

We will allow all 4 million of them to live their lives as they do now.

I am certain we can secure a deal on this soon.

On Northern Ireland and Ireland both the UK and the European Union are fully committed to protecting the peace process and ensuring that there is no return to the problems of the past.

And on the issue of the money

Yes, as the Prime Minister has promised, we will honour our commitments.

Because ours is a country that which plays by the rules and obeys the law.

But we will do our duty for the British taxpayer, and challenge these claims line by line.

We must never lose sight of the bigger picture, and the prize on offer at the end of the process.

And it is only in this context, that we can finally settle this issue.

Closer to home, we are getting Britain ready for Brexit step-by-step.

The first step is the Repeal Bill.

A critical piece of legislation, which ends the supremacy of EU law.

It is essential to a smooth and orderly exit.

And it helps provide the clarity which citizens and businesses have been clamouring for.

Now where MPs set out to improve this legislation, we will welcome their contribution...

But be in no doubt: this Bill is essential and we will not allow it to be wrecked.

On the negotiating front, we are aiming for a good deal

And that is what we expect to achieve.

However, if the outcome of the negotiation falls short of the deal that Britain needs we will be ready for the alternative.

That is what a responsible Government does. Anything else would be a dereliction of duty.

So there is a determined exercise underway in Whitehall devoted to contingency arrangements so that we are ready for any outcome.

Not because it is what we seek, but because it needs to be done.

And while much of our task lies ahead, when I look at what we've achieved so far it should give us cause for optimism.

That we will strike that deal, and create that shared future.

Because Brexit is not a rejection of Europe, or indeed the values and ideals that are shared across our continent.

It is a decision by the British people to leave the political project.

A project which may be right for the other nations who remain there by the consent of their people.

But one that is no longer right for us.

They approach it through the prism of their own history – one that, in the past, was all too often determined by dictatorship and domination, invasion and occupation.

For them Europe symbolises democracy, liberty, modernity, the rule of law.

Our own island story follows a different path.

We had been the leading liberal democracy for over a century before we joined the common market.

And when we decided to leave the European Union we

voted,
not against the political
project itself, but
against Britain's involvement in it.

Europe's history will continue, and so will ours, and
we will remain good friends and allies.

And for those who claim that we are not good
Europeans.

Well, did you know that we spend one and half times as
much on defence as the European average? That is how we stationed troops on
Europe's border in Estonia and in Poland.

I call that being a good European.

We spend over twice the European average helping the
poorest people on the planet.

Including in Africa where for many, British aid acts
as a ladder for people to climb out of the hands of people smugglers.

I call that being a good European.

And we are the first to help our neighbours in the
fight against terror...as both our Belgian and our French colleagues found last
year.

I call that being a good European.

This is more than warm words.

None of it comes for free.

If we spent only the European average on defence, on
international development, on intelligence, we would spend £22 billion less a
year.

And that isn't going away. Because we choose to be
good global citizens.

That's what we mean when we say we are leaving the
EU, but not leaving Europe or *our shared values*.

So this is our plan, and I'm incredibly lucky to have been given the team
to deliver it.

The intelligence, dedication and sheer hard work of
Robin Walker, Steve Baker and our Minister in the Lords Joyce Anelay.

Our excellent PPSs, Gareth Johnson and Jeremy Quinn.

And the support of our hard-working public-spirited

and patriotic civil servants in Whitehall.

And on a personal point can I put on record my thanks for my two former Ministers David Jones and George Bridges.

I'd like you to join me in thanking them all.

So together, as a team, we will work to deliver the national interest.

Now if there's one thing I don't need to do today, it's to remind you to believe in our country.

But if I have one message for you, it is to keep your eyes on the prize.

You will have read in the newspapers lurid accounts of the negotiations with the predictions of break down and crisis.

Offensive, indeed insulting, briefing to the newspapers, which I take as a compliment.

Of course sometimes the exchanges are tough, but that is to be expected.

The job the Prime Minister has entrusted to me is to keep a calm eye on our goal and not be diverted.

Because the prizes for success are enormous. As are the consequences of failure.

I didn't campaign so hard in the referendum for the pleasure of negotiating with the European Commission

I did it because the future of this country is great.

And this Government is facing up to it.

Success will not be automatic, we will have to work hard for it.

We will encourage the things that we Conservatives believe in:

Hard work, Enterprise, risk-taking

Innovation, competition, self-reliance.

When we leave the EU, our successes, and yes, our failures, will be ours and ours alone.

But we are the country of
William Shakespeare and Jane
Austen,
of Alexander Fleming and
James Dyson. A
super power in science, with the fairest legal system in the world.

Britain is where you come if you want to study
artificial intelligence or life sciences

And being who we are and drawing on our strengths,
we can be confident that our
successes will dwarf our failures

So let us turn to face the future,

Delivering on the referendum

Setting out a new relationship with Europe.

Pushing forward, to grasp the opportunities that lie
ahead.

Looking forward, to the future we forge together.

Putting our country on the path to greatness once
again.”

ENDS

Rudd: Building a Safer Britain

Amber
Rudd, Home Secretary, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference in
Manchester said:

***(Check
against delivery)***

“Conference,

Standing here in
Manchester it is impossible to forget the sight of this proud city, shrouded
in
grief, after a pop concert in May.

It is impossible to
forget the images of the terrified concert-goers ... the images of the injured

and the dead – some so very young.

The toll of those who have been the victims of such violence this year is grim. It includes those targeted outside Finsbury Park Mosque, and in London Bridge. It includes the innocent people mown down on Westminster Bridge. It includes Police Constable Keith Palmer who paid with his life in the line of duty, trying to stop that attack.

His death is a reminder of the daily danger in which our police force and intelligence agencies put themselves, to keep the rest of us safe. They have our utmost gratitude and so too the brave men and women of the Fire Service, for their extraordinary heroism, in battling the Grenfell Tower fire. Their job, like mine, is to do everything in their power to keep this country safe. And this year, more than ever, it's right that we thank them.

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There are other images from this year that I choose to remember. And they are these.

I remember the doctors and nurses from Guys Hospital, with so little regard for their own safety, running towards the carnage on Westminster Bridge. Their only thought was to get to those who needed help.

I remember the courage of Mohammed Mahmoud, Imam at the Finsbury Park Mosque, and the small group who, in his own words, "managed to calm people down to extinguish any flames of anger or mob rule".

There are those who after the failed device at Parsons Green opened their homes, and offered to 'put the kettle on' – a uniquely British response.

And in the aftermath of the attack here in Manchester, communities came together in a great expression of solidarity. United in sadness with a desire to show the city was not beaten.

It is such displays of courage in the face of terror, of resilience, and of compassion, that I think should make us proud. Proud of the spirit which pulls us all together, in defiance of those who would harm us.

This is what I believe Britain is about. And this is the spirit we must harness to build a safer, more united Britain.

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I was struck by what Bear said about the multi-faith nature of the scouts. It's a powerful reminder of the civic groups that bind our society together. The united Britain we all want to see.

As Home Secretary, you see the sorts of initiatives around the country that are doing excellent work, to build stronger, more resilient communities.

After the year we have faced, we will need more of them.

I've spoken to mothers learning about what their kids do online, so they know where they could be vulnerable to pernicious influences. I've seen groups set up to challenge racism in sports, and places where those same sports are being used to encourage greater integration in communities.

Establishing the new Commission on Countering Extremism will further support this agenda, by exposing extremism and division. It will be key in challenging those who preach hatred.

The task of tackling the warped Islamist ideologies that have inspired terrorist attacks this year is without a doubt amongst the greatest we have faced. But it is not the only one.

Violent and non-violent extremism in all its forms – Anti-Semitism, neo-Nazism, Islamophobia, intolerance of women's rights – these, and others, cannot be permitted to fester. Our values are far, far better than this. And we owe it to ourselves to root this hatred out wherever it emerges.

The safer Britain I want to help build as Home Secretary is a united one.

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As we have seen all too painfully this year, the UK faces an unpredictable threat from terrorism. From "lone wolf actors", to those radicalised online in their bedrooms, to Da'esh groups hiding in the ruins of Raqqa. We face random attacks at home, and well-planned threats to British Nationals and our interests overseas.

We also face a real and growing threat from the extreme right. We all remember the tragic murder of

the excellent MP, Jo Cox, as she took part in our democratic process. Last year, I made the first terrorist proscription for an extreme right-wing organisation – National Action. And just last week I banned two more repugnant mutations of that organisation.

What I can tell you today is that while 5 plots got through this year, 7 were also stopped by our world class security services. Be in no doubt, the huge investment we are making in our counter terrorist efforts is saving lives, even when we tragically have seen so many lost.

If we're to do better then we have to be a step ahead. And that means being nimble and responsive as the threat evolves.

Over the last months, I have been reviewing our counter-terrorism powers and legislation.

We have seen what could be interpreted as a shift towards crude attacks, with lone or few attackers, using everyday items. There also appears to be a trend towards shorter timescales, from aspiration to attacks.

If we're going to keep people safe we need to disrupt plots in their early stages. Many such plots will include some element of online radicalisation.

Extremists and terrorist material can still be published online, and is then too easily accessible on some devices within seconds...Messages of hatred and violence accessible from any laptop or smart phone.

Progress has been made, but this has got to stop.

Today I am announcing that we are tightening our laws for individuals looking at this type of material online.

We will change the law, so that people who repeatedly view terrorist content online could face up to 15 years in prison. This will close an important gap in legislation. At present, the existing offence applies only if you have downloaded or stored such material – not if you are repeatedly viewing or streaming it online. A critical difference.

We will also change the law in another important way. If someone publishes information about our police or armed forces for the purpose of preparing an act of terrorism, then

they could face up to fifteen years in prison.

My job isn't just to protect the public.

It's also to protect those who put their lives on the line for us. These changes will do both.

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But it is not just Government who has a role here. In the aftermath of the Westminster Bridge attack, I called the internet companies together. Companies like Facebook, Google, Twitter and Microsoft. I asked them what they could do, to go further and faster.

They answered by forming an international forum to counter terrorism. This is good progress, and I attended their inaugural meeting in the West Coast.

These companies have transformed our lives in recent years with advances in technology.

Now I address them directly. I call on you with urgency, to bring forward technology solutions to rid your platforms of this vile terrorist material that plays such a key role in radicalisation.

Act now. Honour your moral obligations.

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We all need to move more quickly to keep Britain safe.

Removing harmful material from the internet is a core activity of Prevent, our prime counter-radicalisation programme. But there is also a clear, human safeguarding element.

In London earlier this year, I met a mother whose son had travelled to Syria to fight for Da'esh. She had no idea of his plan. She was devastated.

But it was not just her son who had been groomed by Da'esh's toxic influence. Her daughter's school had concerns that she too might travel to Syria. The local Prevent team provided counselling to both mother and daughter. Without the support that Prevent

provided, it is likely she simply would not have known where else to turn.

Conference, Prevent works.

This is not to say that we cannot improve it. But I would issue this challenge today to its detractors: work with us, not against us.

We all have a role to play. Prevent isn't some 'Big Brother' monolithic beast. It's all of us working together, through local initiatives set up by local people, schools, universities and community groups.

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Now, I know I have done something very unusual for a politician in current times ... I've spoken for this long without mentioning Brexit.

Back in June 2016 everyone had their say.

The country made a clear decision. I have said it before, and I say it again – I fully respect the result.

We chose to leave and we must make a success of Brexit. Our children's futures depend on it.

These negotiations are going to be challenging. But great challenges also bring great opportunities.

With David Davis, I have proposed an ambitious new security treaty. So that even as we leave the EU, we can continue to work with our European allies to keep us safe.

And later in the year we will publish a paper on our future immigration system – showing how we will have greater control over our immigration rules in the future. But also how there will be no cliff edge for businesses. Because I appreciate it will take time for them to adjust after over 40 years of free movement.

As we build that new immigration system and deliver on the result of last year's referendum, I'm committed to working with businesses, both large and small, to make sure we don't impose unnecessary burdens, or create damaging labour shortages.

We'll be taking these decisions on the basis of comprehensive new evidence. I have commissioned the Government's independent advisers on migration to prepare reports – for the

first
time ever – on both the impact of free movement on the British economy and
the
value that international students bring to our world class university sector.

A new security treaty. A
new immigration system. Decisions based on evidence and consultation. That's
how we can bring the country together, restore the public's confidence in
immigration, and keep British citizens safe, as we leave the European Union.

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Put simply: my job as
Home Secretary is to make Britain safer. I have talked today about terrorism.
But it also includes protecting the most vulnerable in our society...Those who
have been exploited, abused, made victims of crime.

Among them there will be
those suffering abuse that see no escape or refuge. There will be those who
have been failed before, whose trust and belief in the system is gone.

The injustices they have
suffered must not simply be allowed to fade away uncorrected. The scale of
abuse
suffered by children over decades in this country is shocking.

Before 2010, child
sexual abuse was simply not a sufficient enough priority.

Measures we have
implemented in recent years have changed that. But as with all crime, it is
evolving, rapidly.

Technology has made
content and online abuse easier to find and participate in, through peer to
peer file sharing, through chatrooms and online forums. And it has
created conduits that enable abusers to search out and make contact with
their
victims in new ways.

The National Crime
Agency tell me there has been an exponential surge in the volume of child
sexual abuse referrals. They tell me it is one of the most challenging
threats we face.

This is a vile crime,
with thousands of victims around the world.

Today I can announce the
UK Government is investing in a ground-breaking technology, which partners in
Canada have developed.

It is called Project Arachnid. An apt name. It is software that crawls, spider-like across the web, identifying images of child sexual abuse, and getting them taken down, at an unprecedented rate.

Our investment will also enable internet companies to proactively search for, and destroy, illegal images in their systems. We want them to start using it as soon as they can.

Our question to them will be 'if not, why not'. And I will demand very clear answers.

This is a global technology solution to a global technology problem. It would not be possible without the efforts of partners and internet companies around the world. And their efforts are to be commended.

But we also know that end to end encryption services like Whatsapp, are being used by paedophiles. I do not accept it is right that companies should allow them and other criminals to operate beyond the reach of law enforcement. There are other platforms and emerging trends that are equally worrying.

We must require the industry to move faster and more aggressively. They have the resources and there must be greater urgency. If not, the next generation of our children will have been needlessly failed. That is not acceptable to me. And I can tell you Conference, on my watch that simply will not be happening.

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A year ago, I stood before you and set out my priorities as Home Secretary. Keeping your neighbourhoods and our country safe. Protecting the vulnerable. Moving at a pace with evolving crime to better disrupt it.

Where crime is moving increasingly online, we are expanding our efforts. With billions invested in cyber security and hundreds of millions invested in police transformation. There's a renewed focus on combatting fraud. And we're introducing new offences to protect women and girls.

We will also shortly publish our consultation outlining how we intend to crack down on violent crime and

offensive weapons. It will be complemented next year by a new strategy to combat serious violence. We are going to prevent children purchasing knives online, and we are going to stop people carrying acid in public if they don't have a good reason.

Acid attacks are absolutely revolting. You have all seen the pictures of victims that never fully recover. Endless surgeries. Lives ruined. So today, I am also announcing a new offence to prevent the sale of acids to under 18s. Furthermore, given its use in the production of so-called 'mother of Satan' homemade explosives, I also announce my intention to drastically limit the public sale of sulphuric acid.

This is how we will help make our communities safer as crime changes.

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None of this would have been achieved without the dedication of my ministerial team: Brandon Lewis, Ben Wallace, Nick Hurd, Sarah Newton, Susan Williams

And wider support group in Parliament: Andrew Griffiths, Robert Jenrick, Nus Ghani, James Cleverly, Simon Hoare and Charlotte Vere.

I am so grateful for all your hard work.

But, as an MP in a marginal seat, I know the most important thank you should go to you.

I know more than most how nerve-wracking it can be to see a handful of ballot papers representing the future – not just remaining an MP... but continuing this job as your Home Secretary, with the essential work that needs doing.

I cannot overstate my appreciation for all the people that chose to go out with me in the rain on a Saturday morning. Who scrabble on hands and knees to shove a leaflet through those irritating letter boxes located at the bottom of the door – my personal hate. Who negotiate ferocious dogs, or in the case of Hastings and Rye swooping seagulls, to get those pledge letters through every door.

There is no question that you made the difference. Without it, I wouldn't be standing here today. Please know that I am so grateful to you for your time, and belief, and when it's that close... as in my case 346 votes close... it gives the phrase 'every

vote counts' a whole new meaning.

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Conference, thank
goodness Diane Abbott wasn't doing the sums that night.

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A year on from standing
here for the first time as your Home Secretary my priorities remain
unchanged.

We live in dangerous
times, as we have so tragically seen in the past few days with the events in
Canada, France and now Las Vegas.

In Britain, there is
still much more work to do to build a safer country.

Not just to tackle the
increased threat from terrorists. Crucial as that is. But also to help those
shackled in domestic servitude. To better support through a new bill the
victims of domestic violence, and more effectively hunt the perpetrators.

To make sure we never
forget the commitment of our police, our Police and Crime Commissioners and
our
intelligence forces, by whose diligence and vigilance we are kept safe.

That's why my department
is working with the Police Federation on its campaign to Protect the
Protectors. We've already funded a new national police welfare service. We're
reviewing the law so the police can pursue the appalling thugs on mopeds who
attack people on our streets. And we're also examining whether we need
clearer
rules so anyone who assaults an emergency service worker faces a tougher
sentence.

The police protect us
and it's my job to make sure we protect them.

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Conference, I would like
to share two final thoughts with you.

When the country is
facing so many complex threats, I do not believe that our country would be
safe
in the hands of Jeremy Corbyn, John McDonnell and Diane Abbott. The
Conservative Party has always been, and always must be, the party of law and
order. And I will give credit to previous Labour Home Secretaries that took

important steps to improve our security.

But this lot are
different.

They have spent three
decades opposing anti-terrorist laws. They've talked of their 'friends' in
 Hamas and Hezbollah. They are silent on the anti-semitism that festers in
 their
 Party. They won't clearly condemn the actions of the IRA. They don't support
 police officers shooting to kill. They've called for the dismantling of the
 police, the disbandment of MI5 and the disarming of police officers.

Saying you condemn all
 violence when specifically asked if you'll condemn one groups' actions isn't
 good enough. Staying silent when your supporters abuse and insult people
 because of their religion, sex or political views isn't good enough. Simply
 paying lip service to demonstrate your commitment to our security isn't good
 enough.

Their record proves they
 are not serious. And your safety would not be their priority as a result.

Britain deserves better
 leadership than this in these difficult times. And it has it with my
 distinguished predecessor, Theresa May, and the Conservative Party.

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My second conviction is
 one that I hope you will also share.

Throughout history our
 nation has faced many threats. In the twentieth and twenty first century,
 these threats have at times been acute.

But we have faced
 them. And we have faced them down.

Westminster, Manchester
 Arena, London Bridge, Finsbury Park and Parsons Green ... some of the worst
 terrorist attacks in decades.

They have tested our
 resolve. It will likely be tested again.

What terrorists want is
 for us to fear, to turn away from each other, and to become divided.

We will not.

We will stay united,
 together.

Because this is our
Britain not theirs.

It is our way of life
that defines us as a country. It is our values, our freedoms and the
communities we've built that make us a proud, strong and united nation.

They will always do so.

Thank you."

ENDS

Fox: Britain's Positive Future

The Rt Hon Liam Fox MP, Secretary of State for
International Trade, speaking today at Conservative Party
Conference in Manchester said:

***(Check
against delivery)***

"OK.
It's time for some optimism.

It
doesn't seem like a year since we last met together in Birmingham. When we
did
so, my Department had been in existence for little over two months.

We
had the challenge, but more importantly the wonderful opportunity, to build a
new department designed for the trade challenges of the 21st
century.

It
has been a huge honour to be at the centre of such a historic project and to
work alongside some of the most talented and energetic people in our country.

In
a short time, we have achieved so much.

We
have attracted the brightest and best talent from across Whitehall, the
private
sector and abroad in order to make sure that we have the skills we need to
help
British business succeed.

We
now have over 3400 DIT personnel including those in 108 posts around the
globe,
literally working around the clock in our national interest.

But
none of this could have been achieved without our parliamentary
colleagues: our departmental Whips, Heather Wheeler and Liz Sugg
and my outstanding PPS Tom Pursglove; and PPS to
our Ministers, Mike Wood.

I'm
delighted to welcome Rona Fairhead who joined us as our Minister in
the Lords last week, and who will be leading our new export strategy. She
follows in the footsteps of Mark Price who is returning to the private
sector.
Mark, we all owe you a huge debt of gratitude for the tireless work you did
for
our country.

And
I'm thrilled that following the general election I was fortunate enough to
retain Greg Hands and Mark Garnier – two of the finest Ministers in
Whitehall.

And
let's not forget the invaluable dedication of our tremendous civil servants
both here at home, and those in posts abroad, who work tirelessly on behalf
of
our country and who deserve more thanks than they sometimes get.

We
are blessed in having a unity of purpose that I have never experienced in any
other department in Whitehall.

Our
vision is of a UK that trades its way to prosperity, stability and security.

We
know that to realise this vision we must build a department that champions
free
trade, helps businesses export, drives investment and opens up markets so
that
more British businesses can take up the opportunities that exist in the
global
economy.

And
we need to prepare for life after Brexit, to make the technical changes and
global arrangements that will enable us to take full advantage of having an

independent trade policy for the first time in over 40 years.

And we have done so against an economic backdrop where the fundamentals of the British economy have been sound and resilient.

Because the naysayers got it wrong – and doesn't it annoy you when people preface any piece of good news with the phrase "despite Brexit". Well, doesn't it?

So let's just have a reality check.

We have the highest number of people in employment ever, "despite Brexit".

Last year we had the highest inward investment to the UK ever, creating over 75,000 new jobs and safeguarding over 32,000 others, "despite Brexit".

We have new cars being built in Sunderland and Cowley, amongst the highest economic growth rates in the developed world, an 11% rise in exports and the best order books for British manufacturers in 22 years.

No, not despite Brexit but because of the sound economic management of a Conservative government under the leadership of our Prime Minister, Theresa May and Chancellor, Phillip Hammond.

And last week we saw the full horrors of what a Labour alternative might look like. Economic incompetence, financial incontinence and self-congratulatory nonsense.

A leadership that is conning Britain's young people, planning to borrow and spend on an unprecedented scale leaving the debts and the inevitable taxes to the next generation. It is a confidence trick. Labour claim to be the party who support young people when, in reality, they are the party who will sell out young people.

We, on the other hand are getting on with the business of governing.

We will leave the European Union, and with it, the Single Market and the Customs Union, at the end of March 2019. We are now making the preparations for that to

happen.

First,
at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva, we have to table new trading schedules – which are the legal basis of our international trading obligations.

We have increased our staff numbers and worked hard with our international partners to ensure that this process is as technical and straightforward as possible.

Second,
we have to translate into UK law, the trade agreements that the EU has, with other countries, and to which we are a party.

There
are around 40 such EU free trade agreements and we have been working to ensure
that we continue our trading advantages with important markets, such as Switzerland and South Korea, avoiding any disruption at the point we leave the
EU.

Beyond
that, we will need to look to new agreements to ensure that we can take full advantage of the opportunities that will arise in the future.

Of
course, as we look globally, we must continue to recognise the hugely important market for the UK that the EU provides. That is why the Prime Minister and David Davis have consistently said that we want to see a full and
comprehensive agreement with the EU, retaining an open and free trading area across the European continent.

That
is in the interests of both the UK and our European partners who we want to see
prosperous and strong, playing a full part in our mutual economic well-being and security.

But
the EU itself estimates that over 90% of global growth in the next 10 to 15 years will occur outside Europe so we must be ready to meet that challenge.

These
are the markets where Britain must trade, invest and partner, ensuring that we
deliver and bring back to Britain the fruits of growth in some of the world's most dynamic places.

From
the vibrant energy of the Asian economies to the awakening giant of

Latin America to the potential of the African continent, new opportunities are arising, new ventures beckoning and new possibilities blossoming.

We have already begun discussions with the United States, Australia and New Zealand about future relationships.

We have established a trade policy group to lead our trade negotiations of the future and recruited the terrific Crawford Falconer from New Zealand to head up a new trade profession, creating new skills and career opportunities in trade.

We have established 12 working groups with 17 countries from India to Brazil and from the Gulf to Australia.

As Ministers we have travelled to over 100 global markets, promoting British exports of goods and services, encouraging inward investment to the United Kingdom and seeking overseas investment opportunities so that British companies develop a genuinely global footprint.

Am I optimistic about the future? Absolutely.

When people ask if I'm a glass half full or half empty man – I just tell them that I'm Scottish and the glass isn't big enough.

And we continue to innovate to help UK businesses, large and small. We have a dedicated network of Trade Envoys, and will shortly have a fully established complement of Trade Commissioners to lead nine new regions across the world, bringing together expertise in export promotion, investment and policy at our posts abroad.

We will bring an end to micromanagement from Whitehall and give those with the intuition and understanding of international markets the freedom they need to do the job that this country needs them to do.

And our job is to ensure that everything we do helps British business.

We have created a cutting edge digital trading site – called great.gov.uk – showcasing Britain to the world and showing real time export opportunities.

And we are now providing political risk insurance so that even the most difficult

markets can be accessed with confidence and for SMEs we will make export finance available through their own banks for the first time, making help available quickly and efficiently.

But

we must not assume that everyone takes the same positive view of global free trade that we do. There are many who are worried about the disruptive effects of the globalised economy and the effect it may have on their own jobs and prosperity. If we are to get wide acceptance of a competitive, free market, global economy then we must ensure that it works for everyone. And we must provide mitigation where disruption is caused to individuals or communities.

In

particular, we have to ensure that our training and reskilling is sufficient to help people back into the workplace as quickly and smoothly as possible.

We

may think that the benefits of free trade are self-evident but we need to sell our vision and mission to a public that is often either unaware or sceptical about the benefits.

We

need to say that when the UK sells its goods and services to other countries it helps the UK economy grow and become stronger.

We

need to say that improving trade and selling more into markets overseas support jobs at home.

And

we need to point out that the choice and competition that comes from trade means a greater variety of goods in the shops, helping keep prices down and making incomes go further.

Getting

cut-price produce from Lidl and Aldi is free trade in action.

Getting

bigger widescreen TVs at lower prices from Currys is free trade in action.

Getting

lower cost school clothing or having a full range of fruit and vegetables all year round is free-trade in action.

On

the other hand, putting up barriers to trade – or protectionism – leads to higher prices and less choice. Ultimately, it leads to a less competitive

economy that delivers lower living standards.

Let's
make our arguments mean something to all our people.

And
more, let's go beyond the economic arguments and make the moral case too.

Over
the last generation, more than 1 billion people have been taken out of abject poverty thanks to the success of global trading. It is the greatest reduction in poverty in human history and we are working hand in hand with our development policy so that ultimately people can trade their way out of poverty rather than simply depending on aid.

Of
course no one is likely to disagree with the sentiment. Yet the most developed countries have been placing more and more obstacles in the way of free trade in recent years. According to the OECD, at the end of 2010 the G7 and G20 countries were operating around 300 non-tariff barriers to trade. By the end of 2015 this had increased to over 1200.

Those
who have benefited most from free-trade in the past cannot pull up the drawbridges behind them. It is completely unacceptable, which is why, as we leave the European Union, and take up our independent seat at the World Trade Organization, we will be unequivocal champions of free-trade for the benefit of all.

But
we need to see free trade in a wider context still. We live in a world that is more interconnected and more interdependent than at any time in our history. Free trade helps to ensure that there is an ever wider sharing of prosperity. That prosperity, which encourages and develops social cohesion, underpins political stability. And that political stability, in turn, is part of the framework for our global security.

That
is why we must see them all as part of a continuum and why it is so essential that our trade policy, our development policy and our foreign policy work hand in hand, which is why Boris, Priti and I are working so closely together.

So

Let's be upbeat, Let's be positive. Let's be optimistic.

From

Jakarta to Panama to Tokyo to Johannesburg, I have heard nothing but a willingness to do business with Britain, a respect for the quality of our goods and services and a desire to develop partnerships with British business.

We

need to take as positive a view of Britain as they do.

We

need to stop the negative, undermining, self-defeating pessimism that is too prevalent in certain quarters and be bold, be brave and rise to the global challenges, together.

We

are not passengers in our own destiny. We can make change happen if we want to.

And

it is this great party leading our great country that will make that change and lead us to a great future.

Thank

you."

ENDS

[Lidington: Putting security and rehabilitation at the heart of prison reform](#)

David

Lidington, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, said:

(Check against delivery)

"Yesterday morning, as Lord Chancellor, I joined our country's senior judges and lawyers in Westminster Abbey to mark the opening of the new legal year. Then we processed together across Parliament Square to Westminster Hall

—

the heart of our democracy.

It was a great occasion, a celebration of the long history and ancient traditions of our legal system.

But at heart, what was being honoured was not wigs and robes, nor ritual and protocol, but the living constitutional principles which that ceremony affirmed.

The rule of law and the independence of the judiciary underpin our democracy and lie at the heart of our way of life. They are the very cornerstone of our freedoms.

No individual, no organization, no government is above the law.

That is why the refusal by the leadership of today's Labour Party to rule out supporting illegal strikes is a shameful abdication of responsibility from a party seeking to govern.

I believe, this party believes, in the rule of law, and in our system of justice that protects the innocent, punishes the guilty, and gives voice to victims.

And after seven years of Conservatives in office, crime is down by a third. More victims of serious crimes – particularly sexual offences – are coming forward, no longer silenced by fear of stigma or mistrust.

Of course there is always more to be done. That's why, together with Amber Rudd, I am developing a comprehensive strategy to tackle domestic violence and abuse, a pernicious crime that has been in the shadows for too long in our country.

I pay tribute to our Prime Minister, Theresa May, who has been unwavering in the fight against injustice throughout her time at the Home Office and in Downing Street.

I also want to thank my outstanding ministerial team – Dominic Raab, Sam Gyimah, Phillip Lee and Richard Keen, our whips Mike Freer and Charlotte Vere and our PPSs Lucy Frazer and Alan Mak. They all work incredibly hard for our party and for our country.

They deserve our thanks.

The greatest challenge facing our criminal justice system is in our prisons.

The men and women who work in our prisons are the unsung heroes of the criminal justice system.

Day in, day out, they accept responsibility for more than 86,000 offenders, to keep them secure and the public safe.

As I've visited prisons and listened to officers and governors, I've been struck by their professionalism, their dedication and their commitment, not just to keep prisons secure, but to do everything they can to help prisoners make a change in their lives.

Too often, this work can be forgotten. It's unseen behind the high walls of our prisons. But we should all take this opportunity to thank our prison staff for what they do on behalf of us all.

Prison officers face enormous pressure. The levels of violence inside our prisons are too high. So are cases of self-harm and suicide among prisoners.

Last year, the Prisons Ombudsman said that the arrival of new synthetic drugs into our prisons was a game-changer. These drugs, smuggled in from the outside, were – he said – increasing violence, debt, poor health, and instability.

Today, more of that drug traffic is being orchestrated by sophisticated criminal networks. Gangs smuggle not only drugs, but mobile phones for their operations. They use drones to drop as much as a kilo of drugs at a time.

They stop at nothing, even spraying children's drawings – sent to inmates – with liquid synthetic drugs to infiltrate our prisons.

This is no cottage industry. This is not a matter of opportunism. It is serious organized crime.

I am determined to do more to track and target that crime. So today I can announce the start of additional intelligence-led counter-drone operations, to disrupt drones as they enter prison airspace and trace them back to the criminals involved.

Inside prisons, we've already deployed hundreds of sniffer dogs trained to detect drugs, and we're working with the technology companies to block mobile signals and drones within the prison walls. And today I can announce pilots of a new generation of body scanners to add to our tools in the fight against drug smuggling.

And we have ramped up our efforts to deploy more and better trained staff. Today we have 868 more prison officers on duty than at the start of the year, meaning we are on course to hire two and half thousand extra frontline officers by the end of 2018. And we are keeping them safer too – training staff to use body-worn cameras to deter assaults and capture evidence whenever they occur.

We will not let up on action to ensure that our prisons are secure and that prison staff and prisoners are safe.

Here today, in Manchester, we are reminded of the loss and the grief

this city suffered when terrorists struck here in May, at the most innocent and vulnerable of us all: children emerging from a concert. As the Prime Minister has said, we cannot and must not pretend that things can continue as they are.

We have stepped up the work within prison to contain dangerous extremists, opening separation units to stop our most toxic prisoners from being able to groom or intimidate others. And we've established a counter-intelligence unit to monitor and disrupt the evolving threat of extremism behind bars.

Safety and security are important in their own right, but they've got a broader purpose too. The real prize of a calm and ordered prison environment is to make it possible to transform them into places of genuine reform and rehabilitation.

All but a tiny handful of prisoners will one day be released. And we cannot be satisfied with a situation in which nearly half of prisoners reoffend within a year of release. That failure matters. It matters to us, as Conservatives, because in the end the cost of reoffending is borne by the victims of those crimes.

Let me be clear: those who commit crimes are responsible for their actions. And successful rehabilitation has to start with the prisoner wanting to make it work. There are some who, no matter what support is offered, will show no remorse and no desire to change.

Nothing can excuse crime. But we have to recognise that the problems in our prisons don't start at the gates.

A quarter of prisoners have spent time in care. Many come from homes that were at best chaotic, at worst violent and abusive. And the cycle perpetuates: nearly two thirds of prisoners' sons go on to commit crime. Most prisoners assessed on arrival have the reading skills of an 11-year-old, and half have no qualifications at all.

When these prisoners return to society I want to see them able to get a job and to keep it. I want them willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their families, keeping on the straight and narrow rather than falling back into their old ways.

And I want more intensive rehabilitation to take place in the community, particularly to tackle offenders with substance misuse and mental health needs.

We also need probation to work better, so we have tough community sentences that command the confidence of the courts and the public.

Now, rehabilitation does not mean that we ignore the need for punishment and deterrence. It means using the time that we have people inside to

maximize

the chance that they will change their attitudes when they get out, spending as much time as possible in classrooms and workshops, not banged up in cells.

So I am pushing ahead with reform. I am giving prison governors new powers over how their prisons are run. Next year, every governor will be given the power to tailor education and training to the needs of their prisoners. They'll have more freedom to innovate, but they will also be held to account for the results of their work.

And that goes for us too. Openness and transparency are powerful instruments of change. The reports of prison inspectors shine a spotlight on problems. Where recommendations are made by the Inspectorate, they should be followed up. So I have set up a new taskforce, charged with responding promptly and publicly to inspection reports and following those through with action to put problems right – and if we disagree, providing a clear, public explanation.

We have a particular responsibility towards young prisoners. We cannot sit back and allow them to become the adult offenders of tomorrow.

Since we took office in 2010, the number of young people in custody has plummeted – by nearly two-thirds- leaving only the most serious and difficult offenders behind bars.

These youngsters also have the most complex needs.

Youth custody cannot just be the dumping ground for society's problems.

So I can today announce a new investment of £64 million to entrench reform of youth custody. We will boost the number of frontline staff in youth offender institutions by 20% – that's 120 additional recruits, including newly trained specialist youth justice workers, equipped to tackle the needs of young offenders.

The work of overcoming the challenges in our prisons means we are also looking beyond the prison walls for solutions.

It includes the work Jeremy Hunt is leading across government on a new strategy for mental health. That will help ensure offenders get the help they need both in prison and after release.

It embraces Justine Greening's drive to promote high-quality apprenticeships and first-class technical and vocational education to give prisoners – old and young – the chance to get steady, quality work after prison.

The private sector has a role to play, too.

Redemption Roasters, a new start-up working at Aylesbury Young Offender Institution in my own constituency, is offering the boys there a full-time barista training programme, with a real prospect of employability. They are working with one 22 year-old apprentice, who in his own words has "never had any experience of working legit". He's now about to begin his first job at Redemption's flagship coffee shop in central London.

This is what a fresh start looks like.

From Timpsons, to Greggs the bakers, to Halfords, to the construction firm Mitie, employers are appreciating what ex-offenders have to offer: the hard-work and dedication of someone committed to proving they deserve that second chance.

We need to take this further. That's why I am today announcing a new national task force – the New Futures Network – to match offenders with employers and make sure training in prisons mirrors the demands in the local jobs market.

The evidence shows that a former prisoner who has got both the responsibility and opportunity that comes with work is far less likely to reoffend. Getting prisoners into employment works.

This work of reform is ambitious and difficult. I'm not going to promise instant solutions. We are dealing with some of the most troubling and troubled people in society.

But there are two things which, despite those difficulties, still fill me with hope.

The first is the success stories I've heard in our prisons.

There's the officer in Northumberland who runs the recycling yard in his prison, who's built basic English and Maths skills into the work, and set up links with local businesses to secure jobs for his men when they've done their time.

One of the prisoners in his team put it this way. He said: "Not only does this give us hope, it also gives us purpose in life".

Or the prisoner in South Wales who told me how it was the work of staff there to maintain and strengthen contact between prisoners and their families that had finally made him realise how much damage his criminal past and his absence in prison had caused to a partner and children whom he loved, and how he was determined, once released, not to let them down again.

Or the amazing work by charities, from women's groups to churches to sports clubs to get them to see that there is a better way than going back to a life of crime. I want to see charities and voluntary groups, large and small, play an even stronger role as we move forward with our reforms.

And the second thing that gives me both hope and confidence is what, after more than 40 years of membership, I know about our Party.

We say that the Conservative Party is the party of one nation. We are at our best when we speak and act and work on behalf of every part of this country, when we strive to do our best for people from all walks of life, whatever their background, their accent, their beliefs or the colour of their skin.

And just as there can be no no-go areas, no city, no estate, no street that is out-of-bounds for us in our campaigning, so there should be no area of policy, no social challenge that we should fear to address.

So let our government and our party work together, with energy, confidence and determination on the great cause of prison and penal reform.

And through our efforts let us pass on to the next generation a country that is more fair, more ready to offer a second chance, and more just than the one that we inherited ourselves."

ENDS

[Hunt: Conference speech](#)

Jeremy

Hunt, Secretary of State for Health, speaking today at Conservative Party Conference in Manchester said:

(Check against delivery)

"We have a great team at the Department of Health so let me start by thanking them: the wise Philip Dunne, the savvy Steve Brine, the smart James O'Shaughnessy, the street-smart Jackie Doyle-Price and our perfect PPS's Jo Churchill and James Cartlidge.

Sometimes something happens that reminds you how lucky we are to have an NHS.

That happened right here in Manchester in May.

When that bomb went off at the Arena, we saw paramedics running into danger, doctors racing to work in

the middle of the night, nurses putting their arms round families who couldn't even recognise the disfigured bodies of their loved ones.

One doctor was actually on the scene picking up his own daughter when the bomb went off. Thankfully he found her – but instead of taking her home he quietly dropped her off with friends and went straight to work at his hospital – without telling colleagues a word about where he'd been.

It was the same heroism after the London attacks too. So let's start by thanking all those superb NHS staff for being there when our country needed them.

Of course they're there for us not just in national emergencies but in personal ones too.

When you're losing a loved one, when you're sick unexpectedly, when you're knocked sideways by a mental health crisis – the NHS is there. A National Health Service and a national symbol of British professionalism and British compassion.

But it only exists because of its people. So today I want to recognise that supporting NHS staff is one of our most important priorities.

We need more doctors. So last year I said we'd increase the number of doctors we train by a quarter, one of the biggest ever increases.

We also need more nurses. So today I can tell you we'll increase the number of nurses we train by

25% – that's a permanent increase of more than 5,000 nurse training places every single year. And we'll do that not just by increasing traditional university places, but also by tripling the number of Nursing Associates so people already in the NHS can become a registered nurse after a four year apprenticeship without having to do a traditional full time university course.

Derby, Wolverhampton and Coventry Universities have already offered to run apprenticeship nursing courses on hospital and community sites and others will follow, always making sure we maintain the high standards required by the nursing regulator. We'll also launch a new initiative to encourage nurses who have left the profession to come back.

Our NHS is nothing

without its nurses: we need your skills, we need your compassion and with today's announcement we are backing the biggest expansion of nurse training in the history of the NHS.

For nurses, as for all of us, pay and conditions matter. I've already said we'll decide next year's pay awards after listening to the independent pay review bodies. But there are other things we can do today.

Nurses look after us – but they also have their own families to look after: kids at school, a mum or dad with dementia, a partner coping with cancer.

If we're to get the best out of them we need to be much better at supporting them with their own caring responsibilities.

They need to be able to work flexibly, do extra hours at short notice, get paid more quickly when they do and make their own choices on pension contributions. So today I'm also announcing that new flexible working arrangements will be offered to all NHS employees during this parliament. And we'll start next year with 12 trusts piloting a new app-based flexible working offer to their staff.

And like many people, NHS staff can also struggle to find homes near work they can actually afford. So from now on when NHS land is sold, first refusal on any affordable housing built will be given to NHS employees benefitting up to 3,000 families.

And there's one more group who are understandably a bit worried at the moment and that's the 150,000 EU workers in the health and care system. Let me say to them this: you do a fantastic job, we want you to stay and we're confident you will be able to stay with the same rights you have now – so you can continue being a highly valued part of our NHS and social care family.

I became Health Secretary five years ago. It's a long time ago – but I'll never forget my very first week.

Someone gave me the original Francis report into Mid Staffs to take home to read. I was gobsmacked.

How could these terrible things really happen in our NHS?

The Chief Executive of the NHS told me I'd better get used to the fact in hospitals all over the world 10% of patients are harmed. Another senior doctor told me there were pockets of Mid Staffs-like problems everywhere. And academics told me that 3.6% of all hospital deaths were probably avoidable – that's 150 deaths every single week – causing immense heartache to families as we heard so powerfully from Deb just now.

People like Deb – and what a privilege to listen to her this morning – made a choice.

Instead of drawing a line under their personal tragedies and moving on they chose to dedicate their lives to campaigning, reliving their sadness over and over again, just to make sure other families wouldn't have to go through what they did.

They also made my mind up for me: my single ambition as Health Secretary would be to transform our NHS into the safest healthcare system in the world where this kind of thing never happened.

But where on earth do you start?

The first thing is to be honest about where the problems are. My kids are 3, 5 and 7 and as a Dad I know exactly how good all the local schools are – thanks to Ofsted. We had nothing like that in health – so against a lot of opposition in 2013 we became the first country in the world to introduce the Ofsted system to healthcare, giving independent ratings to every hospital, care home and GP surgery.

The results were, to say the least, a big surprise. Look at this.

14 hospitals got an 'outstanding.'
We assumed it would be the famous teaching hospitals, but in fact it was often trusts no one had really heard of outside their area. Like Western Sussex, under the inspiring leadership of Marianne Griffiths, which has the best learning culture I have seen anywhere in the NHS. Or in mental health Northumbria Tyne and Wear which I visited on Friday and is blazing a trail on the safety of mental health patients.

Then we asked ourselves a difficult question. Is quality care just something you have to buy? Of course money matters – you need enough nurses on the wards and that costs money. But it turned out to be a more complex relationship.

All Trusts are paid the same NHS tariff. But on average the ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ trusts were in surplus and the ‘requires improvement’ and ‘inadequate’ ones were in deficit. Why’s that? Because poor care is about the most expensive care you can give. If someone has a fall and stays in hospital an extra week, it’s not just terrible for them it costs us more too.

But our biggest worry was what would happen to the trusts we put into special measures. Would they get trapped in a vicious circle of decline? 35 trusts went into special measures – nearly one in five of all NHS trusts – and so far 20 have come out. What happened?

Take Wexham Park Hospital in Slough. When they went into special measures, the CQC said their care was unsafe, 6 of their 8 clinical areas needed improving and if you asked staff the majority said they would not recommend their own care to a friend or member of their family. Think about that: the staff themselves said their own hospital’s care was not to be trusted.

Two years later under the extraordinary leadership of Sir Andrew Morris and his Frimley team things were transformed: all 8 clinical areas were good or outstanding, more than two thirds of staff started recommending their own care and the Trust became one of only 8 in the country to go straight from special measures to being rated ‘Good.’

And we learned perhaps the most important thing I have learned as Health Secretary. The staff in every Trust going into special measures were exactly the same as the staff coming out. In other words it wasn’t about the staff, it was all about the leadership.

We also learned that you can’t impose quality or safety from above – it has to be part of a culture that comes from the bottom up. And that starts with openness and transparency.

Let me show you that works.

After Mid Staffs we were worried about staffing levels on wards. But rather than a top-down edict telling Trusts to recruit more staff, we did something simpler. We just asked every trust to publish every month the number of nurses employed in each of their wards. What was the impact?

This is the total number of adult nurses employed in the NHS. And you can see in the first two years from 2010 they went down by just under 5,000. Then we introduced ward by ward transparency and what happened? The blue line is the number of nurses Trusts planned to recruit. The green line is what they actually recruited. In other words once we started being transparent about nurse numbers the NHS ended up with 18,000 more nurses than it planned. And the public noticed – inpatient satisfaction over this period rose to record highs.

We also introduced transparency in areas like mental health, our major priority under Theresa May's leadership. We are leading probably the biggest expansion of mental health in Europe right now. But progress across the country has been patchy – so we are using transparency to make sure that wherever you live mental health conditions are always treated as seriously as physical health conditions.

So by shining a light on problems, transparency saves lives. But it also saves money.

Every time someone gets an infection during a hip operation it can cost £100,000 to put right. So under the leadership of Professor Tim Briggs we started collecting data on infection rates across the country. What did Tim find? He found that our best hospitals infect one in 500 patients. But our least good ones it is as many as one in 25 patients.

Putting that right is now saving hundreds of millions of pounds as well as reducing untold human misery. So never let it be said you can't afford safe care – it's unsafe care that breaks the bank.

Now what's been the overall impact of this focus on safety and quality? We all know the pressure the NHS is under. But despite that the proportion of patients being harmed has fallen by 8% and 200 fewer patients harmed every single day.

Staff are happier than

ever with the quality of their care and the proportion of the public who agree their NHS care is good is up 13%.

This July an independent American think tank, the Commonwealth Fund, said the NHS was the best – and safest – healthcare system in the world. That's better than America, better than France, better than Germany and most importantly ahead of the Ashes better than Australia.

But – and there is a 'but' – we still have those 150 avoidable deaths every week.

Twice a week somewhere in the NHS we leave a foreign object in someone's body.

Three times a week we operate on the wrong part of someone's body.

Four times a week a claim is made for a baby born brain damaged.

We may be the safest in the world – but what that really means is that healthcare everywhere needs to change.

In America Johns Hopkins University says medical error causes 250,000 deaths a year – the third biggest killer after cancer and heart disease. Conference I want the NHS to blaze a trail across the world in sorting that out.

So we have big campaigns right now to tackle e-Coli infections, reduce maternity harm, make sure we learn from every avoidable death and most of all keep our patients safe over winter.

But we need to do something else too: and that's get much better at supporting doctors and nurses when they make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes – but only doctors and nurses have been brave enough to choose a career where the price of those mistakes can sometimes be a tragedy.

And when that happens no one is more devastated, no one keener to learn and improve than those same frontline staff.

But we often make that impossible. They worry about litigation, the GMC, the NMC, the CQC, even

being

fired by their trust. Unless we support staff to learn from mistakes we just condemn ourselves to repeat them – and that means dismantling the NHS blame culture and replacing it with a learning culture. The world's largest healthcare organisation must become the world's largest learning organisation –
and it's my job and my mission to make that happen.

Now next year the NHS has an important birthday. Like Prince Charles and Lulu it will turn 70.

Here are the words of the Health Minister who announced its formation back in 1944. [VIDEO]

Nye Bevan deserves credit for founding the NHS in 1948. But that wasn't him or indeed any Labour minister.

That was the Conservative Health Minister in 1944, Sir Henry Willink, whose white paper announced the setting up of the NHS.

He did it with cross-party support. And for me that's what the NHS should always be: not a political football, not a weapon to win votes but there for all of us with support from all of us.

So conference when Labour question our commitment to the NHS, as they did in Brighton, just tell them that no party has a monopoly on compassion.

It's not a Labour Health Service or a Conservative Health Service but a National Health Service that we built and are building together – as I've said many times.

And the next time they question our record, tell them we've given our NHS more doctors, more nurses and more funding than ever before in its history.

Tell them when they left office the NHS wasn't even rated the best in Europe, let alone best in the world as it has been twice on our watch.

And most of all tell them that if they're really worried about the NHS being destroyed, then there's one thing *they* can do: ditch Corbyn and McDonnell's disastrous economic policies which would bankrupt our economy and bring our NHS to its knees.

Because the economic facts of life are not suspended for the NHS: world-class public services need a

world-class economy and to ignore that is not to support our doctors and nurses, it's to betray them.

However unlike Labour we don't make the mistake of saying the challenges facing the NHS are only about money.

If they were, we wouldn't have had Mid Staffs, Morecambe Bay and all those other tragedies that happened during bumper increases in funding.

As Conservatives we know that quality of care matters as much as quantity of money.

So when we battle to improve the safety and quality of care we are making the NHS stronger not weaker.

And we're reinforcing those founding values of the NHS we just heard, namely that every single older person, every single family, every single child in our country matters – and we want all of them to be treated with the same standards of care and compassion that we'd want for our own mum or dad or son or daughter.

That, conference, is why we're backing our NHS to become the safest, highest quality healthcare system in the world and we will deliver the safest, highest quality healthcare system in the world. Thank you.

ENDS