

Speech: Liam Fox celebrates UK-Israel trade relationship

Good morning.

It is an honour to be here today to address the Jewish Care business breakfast, and to join the distinguished list of speakers who have addressed this gathering.

Over the course of my career I have had the pleasure to speak at many charitable gatherings, for a wide variety of good and noble causes.

I'm not sure I have ever, though, addressed a charity which is as comprehensive in its philanthropy as Jewish Care.

And your organisation not only provides important care for the elderly members of the Jewish community, but also for those with dementia, disabilities, or mental health issues.

You even provide leadership opportunities for young people, helping them to develop vital life skills.

Before I entered parliament, I worked as a GP. I have experienced first hand how much of a difference charitable organisations like Jewish Care can make, caring for the most vulnerable people in our society.

It is work that is, sadly, too often overlooked by those without direct experience of it. Yet charities can provide targeted care within communities, often reaching parts where the state cannot.

For those of you in a generous mood, there are few organisations more worthy of your munificence.

I know that you have not invited the Secretary of State for International Trade here to wax lyrical about the virtues of Jewish Care, or of charity in general.

But I do see a clear connection between trade and philanthropy.

Without the prosperity that trade engenders, charitable organisations could not flourish, yet there is also a more immediate connection.

The great rabbinical philosopher, Moses Maimonides wrote that:

The highest level of Tzedakah or Charity, is that which enables the recipient to become self-reliant.

For millions of the world's poorest people, trade has meant exactly that.

As economies across the world have liberalised, opportunities for employment, or commerce, have lifted billions from poverty.

According to the World Bank, the 3 decades between 1981 and 2011 witnessed the single greatest decrease in material deprivation in human history – a truly remarkable achievement.

It is hard to imagine an international aid programme – even one as generous as our own – that would or could have been so effective.

It was no coincidence that this period coincided with the great liberalised economies of India and China opening up to the world.

At a fundamental level, free and open trade allows people to improve their own lives, allowing the individual to access global opportunities. It delivers employment, goods and services, often where they are needed most.

Across the world, trade has created prosperity, where once there was only deprivation.

Of course, the United Kingdom has benefitted vastly from centuries of trade, and its promotion comes with a degree of economic self-interest.

We must recognise, though, that there is also an equally strong social and moral case for the defence of trading freedoms.

And I say ‘social’ because whilst trade has delivered vast benefits to those in developing countries, it has also has a transformative effect on the lives of our own people.

Although it might not always be noticed, the wider benefits of a liberal trade policy have spread to British consumers and households by providing a wider choice of goods at a lower price.

Free trade is not only vital in ensuring that supplies of raw materials and everyday essentials like food and clothing are available in the UK; but it also increases the quality of those products, and helps to drive down prices.

In the decade to 2006, the real import price of clothing fell by 38%. In the same period, the price of consumer electronics, as we all know, fell by 50%, despite all the rapid technological achievements of that period, what went from a \$4,000 brick called the mobile phone at that time turns into a super computer in the palm of your hand at a fraction of the price. That is what liberal and open trade can provide.

As a consequence, living standards in this country are now at their highest level in history.

Yet ‘Free Trade’ as a concept is often regarded with suspicion or simple indifference by consumers, who often fail to see how it can make a difference to their lives.

I believe that open, liberal free trade is undeniably a good thing.

It is unfortunate, though, that trading freedoms can no longer be taken for granted.

Last year, the World Trade Organization estimated that the growth in global trade could be as little as 1.8%, falling below the growth in global GDP. This is the inverse of the normal relationship and it's unhealthy, history tells us in the long term.

Moreover, research by the OECD that shows that protectionist instincts have grown since the financial crisis of 2008.

In 2010 G7 and G20 countries were operating some 300 non-tariff barriers to trade – by 2015 this had mushroomed to over 1,200.

So clearly, free trade is in need of a champion. The case for commercial freedom must be made at every level.

To consumers we must show that, when a foreign company invests in your area and creates jobs – that is free trade.

When you use a smartphone or a flat-screen TV at a lower price – that is global free trade.

Or when you go to a supermarket and you buy your fruit and meat and vegetables you want all year round, rather than relying on our own seasonal produce – that is global free trade in action.

These benefits often go unrecognised, even at an official level.

Last Spring, I was at the World Economic Forum in Davos, at a meeting of trade minister from the world's major economies.

It was a full 54 minutes – just shy of an hour – before a single one of the world's trade ministers said the 'C-word'. Consumers were never mentioned at that meeting. We have got to also champion the consumer interest and such a state of affairs illustrates perfectly that a wider recognition is needed of the benefits that free trade can bring to ordinary people.

Those who shape international trade policy must no longer see commercial freedoms solely as a means of reaching a narrow macroeconomic advantage, but as a force for social and geopolitical good.

Those countries, like the United Kingdom, who have benefitted the most from free trade, cannot, in good conscience, pull up the drawbridge. There is a moral obligation to pass on the benefits of free trade to our less developed partners, allowing them access to our markets, or our skills and our expertise.

Such a policy would benefit all of humankind.

My Department for International Trade was founded last year to make Britain a global champion of free trade once again.

We are in a unique position to use our economic and diplomatic influence to extend and protect commercial freedoms across the world.

Of course, as a department of state of the UK, our primary purpose is to ensure that global trade bestows its benefits on Britain.

Our vision is of a UK that trades its way to prosperity, stability and security, and our mission is to help businesses export, drive investment, open up markets and champion free trade.

Liberalisation of the global economy is firmly within this country's interests, and we are ready to take advantage of the historic opportunities that have been presented to this country.

Our departure from the European Union after some 44 years of membership will bring challenges. Yet it will also offer almost limitless possibilities.

For the first time in more than four decades this country will have a fully independent trade policy, to be shaped to best serve the interests of British consumers, British businesses, and the British economy.

The potential of this should not be underestimated. The trading bloc of the European Union has served parts of our economy well, but it is a model that is fundamentally outdated in the age of globalisation.

New technology has reduced the barriers of distance and time, and being tied to other nations simply through geographical proximity is no longer necessary especially in an economy like the UK, which is now 80 % services. The British people have opted not for insularity, but internationalism.

We will soon be in a position to revitalise our existing trade relationships, and to build new connections with those growing economies that will drive prosperity in the 21st century.

Don't believe me, go and look at the EU's website. The EU trade page says in the next 10 to 15 years 90% of global growth will be beyond the borders of Europe. That is where we need to be.

To ignore such possibilities would be a great disservice to the British people.

This vision of the future is central to the government's ambition to build a truly global Britain.

This is about building a country that is a bold, outward-looking champion of free trade.

The UK will lead the defence of the rules-based international system as a newly independent member of the WTO, while forging agreements with partners across the world.

The state of Israel will, of course, be a key partner in that future.

As a longstanding friend of the Israeli people, I was delighted to attend the Tel Aviv in London festival last month.

I was struck by the many similarities between the 2 cities, not only in their formidable international reputations for technology, innovation and financial services, but in the vibrancy of the culture that we share.

These parallels are indicative of the complimentary nature of the Israeli and UK economies. It is a strong foundation from which to enhance our future relationship.

The UK is already the number 1 destination in Europe for Israeli investment, with over 300 companies already operating here.

Yet there is more to be done and more to be achieved. One of the things that I am proud of in my department has been the creation of a UK-Israel Trade Working Group, designed to identify and remove barriers to trade between our 2 countries. This will not only strengthen our bilateral relationship, but provide a strong foundation for further progress upon our exit from the EU, as well as providing greater prosperity, stability and security in Israel itself.

And this is one of the themes that we have across our government because trade is not only done for itself; it provides a prosperity which underpins social cohesion.

That social cohesion helps in turn to underpin political stability and that political stability is a contribution to our wider security.

All of them are parts of a continuum which cannot be disrupted, which is something that both the UK and Israel understand well.

In the extensive travels undertaken by myself and the other departmental ministers in the past 15 months, I have been struck by the sheer level of enthusiasm that exists across the world for Britain's new role.

Nations are not only lining up to enhance their trading relationship with our country, but also to access our wealth of talent, knowledge and expertise.

Our global brand remains incredibly strong. People want to 'buy British' and they want to partner British as well. Globally the commercial prospects for this country have never been brighter and we must embrace them with confidence and optimism.

We are opening a new chapter in our nation's history, but the story has not yet been written.

I believe that politics is a binary choice. You can either shape the world around you, or you'll be shaped by the world around you.

The United Kingdom has the ability to shape the world – all we require is the confidence to do it.

My department stands ready to help shape the future of global trade, placing Britain back at its heart.

Free trade may be a centuries-old concept, but it is also the key to projecting this country's prosperity far into the future.

Sir Winston Churchill once called free trade "a condition of progress". Once again, the great man's words have stood the test of time.

It is incumbent upon all of us to defend that progress.

There will be challenges ahead, but we have the ability, the vision and the determination to shape the future as we see fit.

We are not passengers to our own destiny. We can make change happen if we choose to do so and change we will.

Thank you.

[News story: New Commissioner to the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission: Dr Alice Prochaska](#)

Following a competitive application process, the Foreign & Commonwealth Office is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Alice Prochaska as a new member of the [Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission \(MACC\)](#) with effect from 1 October.

Dr Prochaska fills a vacant post on the Commission. She recently stepped down as Principal of Somerville College Oxford and brings many years' experience of UK higher education to the role. Amongst the many public positions she holds are Chair of the Sir Winston Churchill Archive Trust and Chair of the Institute of Historical Research Trust (University of London).

Commenting on the appointment the Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson MP said:

The Marshall Scholarship scheme is widely considered one of the most prestigious scholarships for US citizens to study in the UK. As future leaders, with a lasting understanding of British society, Marshall scholars strengthen the enduring special relationship between our 2 countries.

Marshall alumni go on to become prominent leaders in their chosen field. To date they include the CEO of LinkedIn, Supreme Court Justices, Members of the US Congress and Presidential Cabinet, the

managing editors of TIME and CNN and even an astronaut. These alumni serve as a symbol of the success of the Marshall scheme.

I welcome Dr Prochaska as a Commission member, who I am certain will ensure that the vital contribution made by the Marshall Scholarship scheme to our special relationship continues for many years to come.

MACC Chairman Christopher Fisher added:

I am delighted that we have been able to attract such a high calibre individual to become a new Marshall Commissioner. The Marshall Scholarship programme has a fantastic track record in maintaining and renewing strong Anglo-American ties. The Commission is fully committed to sustaining the scale, quality and vitality of this programme.

Background

The Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission administers the British Marshall Scholarship scheme, which finances young Americans of high ability to study for a graduate degree in the UK.

Up to 40 scholars are selected each year to study at graduate level at a UK institution in any field of study. As future leaders, with a lasting understanding of British society, Marshall Scholars strengthen the enduring relationship between the British and American peoples, their governments and their institutions. Commissioners serve for a term of 3 years, with the possibility of re-appointment for a second term. The appointment is unpaid.

You can read [more about the Commissioners](#) on the Marshall Scholarship site.

Further information

[News story: New £15 million programme to help train mental health 'first aiders'](#)

A new £15 million programme will see up to 1 million people trained in basic mental health "first aid" skills. The programme will improve personal resilience and help people recognise and respond effectively to signs of mental illness in others.

The campaign, designed and delivered by Public Health England (PHE), will help people assess their own mental wellbeing and learn techniques to reduce stress.

There will be an online learning module designed to improve the public's knowledge, skills and confidence on mental health.

These are skills for life, as most of us will at some point either experience poor mental health or care for a loved one trying to cope. The campaign will aim to build resilience and give people advice, based on what has been shown to work, so that we can all be better at supporting people experiencing poor mental health.

The government will invest £15 million in the campaign. It will launch next year for 3 years. PHE will work closely with Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England and other mental health organisations to ensure the campaign builds on the knowledge and experience of the sector.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

I want to use the power of government as a force for good to transform the way we deal with mental health problems right across society, and at every stage of life.

Tackling the injustice and reducing the stigma associated with mental health conditions is a priority for me, which is why today I set the goal of providing 1 million members of the public with basic mental health awareness and first aid.

[News story: Human Rights Minister marks World Day against the Death Penalty](#)

On World Day Against the Death Penalty, we reaffirm the UK's strong opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances.

It is over fifty years since the UK government abolished the death penalty. We believe its use undermines human dignity, that there is no conclusive evidence of its deterrent value, and that any miscarriage of justice leading to its imposition is irreparable.

More than 140 members of the United Nations have renounced capital punishment in law or practice. The death penalty is steadily becoming the exception rather than the norm.

We urge all states that retain the death penalty to move towards abolition. We will continue to work through our diplomatic network and with international experts to support those striving for reform of the death penalty and to make the case to those only at the beginning of that journey.

[Press release: Lord Deben and Paul Johnson reappointed to Committee on Climate Change](#)

The Committee provides independent advice to government and Parliament on reducing UK emissions and preparing for the impacts of climate change.

Lord Deben has led the Committee since 2012. His 5-year term, due to end this year, has been extended for a further 5 years until September 2022.

Paul Johnson's 5-year term, which also concludes this year, has been similarly extended for a further 5 years until 2022.

The reappointments were made by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, and agreed by the devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Claire Perry, Minister for Climate Change and Industry, said:

I welcome the reappointment of Lord Deben as Chairman of the Committee on Climate Change and of Paul Johnson as Committee Member.

The UK was the first country to introduce legally binding emission reduction targets under the Climate Change Act and we have led the G7 group of countries in cutting our emissions, while growing our economy by more than two-thirds since 1990. The independent advice provided by Lord Deben, Paul Johnson and the entire Committee will help us continue to lead the world in clean growth.

Commenting on his reappointment, Lord Deben said:

Britain is a leader in the world's battle against climate change and I am delighted and honoured to continue as Chairman of the Committee.

Since 2012, amongst many other tasks, the CCC has advised government on the fourth (2023 to 2027) and fifth (2028 to 2032)

carbon budgets, advised the devolved administrations on emission reduction targets and reported to Parliament annually on UK progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

1. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) is the independent statutory body established under the Climate Change Act (2008) to advise the UK government on building a low-carbon economy and preparing for climate change. Further information about the CCC is available at: www.theccc.org.uk.
2. Lord Deben was the UK's longest-serving Secretary of State for the Environment (1993 to 1997) and has held several other high-level ministerial posts, including Secretary of State for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (1989 to 1993). He has consistently championed the strong links between environmental concerns and business interests. He also runs Sancroft, a corporate responsibility consultancy working with blue-chip companies around the world on environmental, social and ethical issues. In addition, Lord Deben is Chairman of Valpak Limited and Chairman of The Personal Investment Management and Financial Advice Association.
3. Paul Johnson has been Director of the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) since January 2011. He is also currently visiting professor in the Department of Economics at University College London. Paul has worked and published extensively on the economics of public policy, with a particular focus on income distribution, public finances, pensions, tax, social security, education and climate change. As well as a previous period of work at the IFS his career has included spells at HM Treasury, the Department for Education and the Financial Services Authority (FSA). Between 2004 and 2007 he was deputy head of the Government Economic Service. Paul is also a member of the Banking Standards Board and of the executive committee of the Royal Economic Society. He was an editor of the Mirrlees Review of the UK tax system.