



HM Government

THE RT HON DR LIAM FOX MP

Former UK Secretary of State for International Trade
and President of the Board of Trade



BIOGRAPHY

“Trade is a way in which we spread prosperity more widely. That prosperity underpins social cohesion, that social cohesion in turns underpins political stability and that political stability is the building block of our collective security”.

Dr Liam Fox MP, Future of Trade and Export Forum, 26th June 2019

The Rt Hon Dr Liam Fox MP is a British politician who has been a staunch advocate for free-trade and a defender of the rules based global trading system based on the WTO.

“I believe that if we want to keep the WTO relevant and vibrant our task is clear: Update. Strengthen and Reform. We must ensure that trade works for everyone. A seasoned politician with wide experience is best placed to give the necessary leadership to the organisation in difficult global circumstances.”

Dr Liam Fox MP, London, 7th July 2020

Dr Fox is a member of the UK Parliament and a Privy Counsellor.

As International Trade Secretary under Prime Minister Theresa May, from 2016 to 2019, he successfully built a new department of government to oversee the creation of the UK’s first independent trade policy for over 40 years post Brexit. Strongly anti-



protectionist, he was also a passionate advocate of the ITC's 'SheTrades' initiative, believing that greater access to trade for women is both economically empowering and socially progressive. He believes that there must be much better coordination between trade and development policy if the full potential of both is to be achieved.

“Fundamentally, free trade is a right. Every person should be free to sell their goods, services or labour to the highest bidder, and to buy from whomever they choose. This principal allows the benefits of trade to spread to every level of society. Above all, trade has been the greatest liberator of the world’s poor, harnessing the forces of globalisation to spread prosperity and lift millions from poverty.”

Dr Liam Fox MP, Frankfurt, 29th November 2016

Dr Fox entered the House of Commons in 1992 and has served in a wide range of posts in both government and opposition. In the government of Prime Minister John Major, he served as Lord Commissioner of the Treasury and then as Minister in the Foreign & Commonwealth Office where he answered on Trade and Aid Policy in the House of Commons. It was during this time that he worked extensively on what became known as the 'Fox agreement' in Sri Lanka, designed to help foster the conditions in which a negotiated solution to the country's civil war could be achieved.

“For the first time in decades, the system of free, fair, rules based multilateral trade which underpins our mutual prosperity has come into question.

Since the financial crisis, G20 countries have been operating an increasing number of non-tariff barriers to trade. In a 21st century globalised world, complex global value chains and trade in inputs stretch across multiple national borders - sometimes going back and forth across them several times. The imposition of tariffs and non-tariff barriers in this globalised world threatens to fragment these supply chains - in turn increasing input costs. This drives up prices for consumers in the domestic market and decreases the competitiveness of exports which contain those imported components.”

Dr Liam Fox MP, Shanghai, 19th November 2018

In opposition, between 1997 and 2010, he held a number of roles including Chairman of the Conservative Party, Shadow Health Secretary, Shadow Foreign Secretary, Shadow Defence Secretary and Constitutional Affairs spokesperson.

“At a fundamental level, free and open trade allows people to improve their own lives, by giving them access to global opportunities, sharing knowledge, skills and experience and fundamentally, by the exchange of goods and services”.

Dr Liam Fox, Mansion House, 17th October 2018



He was appointed Defence Secretary under Prime Minister David Cameron in May 2010, overseeing a major reorganisation of the Ministry of Defence and British involvement in the campaigns in Afghanistan and Libya. He has continued to argue that there needs to be a better understanding about the links between **Trade, Prosperity and Security**, a theme that was a regular feature of his time as international trade secretary. Many of these issues were discussed in his 2013 book 'Rising Tides' which set out the challenges facing the globalised era ranging from terrorism to the potential crisis in global commodities, especially water. The book contained a number of conversations with world leaders from Tony Blair to Condoleeza Rice.

“Trade is not an end in itself. It is a means to spread prosperity. That prosperity underpins social cohesion. That social cohesion in turn underpins political stability, and that political stability is the building block of our collective security. It is a continuum that cannot be interrupted without consequence. If prosperity is denied to those who aspire to it – and free trade is a key enabler of this – we should not be surprised if the result is further mass migration across the globe or indeed political radicalisation.”

Dr Liam Fox MP, Washington, 25th July 2018

Following his period as Defence Secretary he founded a charity, Give Us Time, which provides family holidays for those who serve in the armed forces, especially those who saw combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. While there are a number of charities that look after service personnel themselves, Dr Fox felt that too little support was given to the families of service personnel whose own hardship and sacrifice often went unrecognised.

He was born in Scotland and studied medicine at the University of Glasgow before practising as a doctor in the NHS. He also worked as a civilian army medical officer and a divisional surgeon with St John ambulance, a voluntary medical charity. He has also worked as a speech writer to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and is currently finishing writing a book on Pandemics.

“Even before the pandemic, the world’s trading system was in trouble. Global trade actually slowed in the last quarter of 2019, before Covid hit, and Foreign Direct Investment flows were already below levels recorded between 2010 and 2017. It is not a situation that we can afford to return to.

Dr Liam Fox MP, London, 5th July 2020

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