

Boris Johnson's first speech as Prime Minister: 24 July 2019

Good afternoon

I have just been to see Her Majesty the Queen who has invited me to form a government and I have accepted

I pay tribute to the fortitude and patience of my predecessor

and her deep sense of public service

but in spite of all her efforts it has become clear that there are pessimists at home and abroad

who think that after three years of indecision

that this country has become a prisoner to the old arguments of 2016

and that in this home of democracy we are incapable of honouring a basic democratic mandate

And so I am standing before you today to tell you

the British people

that those critics are wrong

The doubters, the doomsters, the gloomsters – they are going to get it wrong again

The people who bet against Britain are going to lose their shirts

because we are going to restore trust in our democracy

and we are going to fulfil the repeated promises of parliament to the people and come out of the EU on October 31

no ifs or buts

and we will do a new deal, a better deal that will maximise the opportunities of Brexit while allowing us to develop a new and exciting partnership with the rest of Europe

based on free trade and mutual support

I have every confidence that in 99 days' time we will have cracked it

but you know what – we aren't going to wait 99 days

because the British people have had enough of waiting

The time has come to act,

to take decisions

to give strong leadership and to change this country for the better

and though the Queen has just honoured me with this extraordinary office of state

my job is to serve you, the people

because if there is one point we politicians need to remember it is that the people are our bosses

My job is to make your streets safer – and we are going to begin with another 20,000 police on the streets

and we start recruiting forthwith

My job is to make sure you don't have to wait 3 weeks to see your GP

and we start work this week with 20 new hospital upgrades, and ensuring that money for the NHS really does get to the front line

My job is to protect you or your parents or grandparents from the fear of having to sell your home to pay for the costs of care

and so I am announcing now – on the steps of Downing Street – that we will fix the crisis in social care once and for all with a clear plan we have prepared

to give every older person the dignity and security they deserve

My job is to make sure your kids get a superb education

wherever they are in the country

and that's why we have already announced that we are going to level up per pupil funding in primary and secondary schools

and that is the work that begins immediately behind that black door

and though I am today building a great team of men and women I will take personal responsibility

for the change I want to see

Never mind the backstop – the buck stops here

And I will tell you something else about my job.

It is to be Prime Minister of the whole United Kingdom

and that means uniting our country

answering at last the plea of the forgotten people
and the left behind towns
by physically and literally renewing the ties that bind us together
so that with safer streets and better education and fantastic new road and
rail infrastructure and full fibre broadband
we level up across Britain
with higher wages, and a higher living wage, and higher productivity
we close the opportunity gap
giving millions of young people the chance to own their own homes
and giving business the confidence to invest across the UK
because it is time we unleashed the productive power not just of London and
the South East
but of every corner of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland
the awesome foursome that are incarnated in that red white and blue flag
who together are so much more than the sum of their parts
and whose brand and political personality is admired and even loved around
the world
for our inventiveness, for our humour, for our universities, our scientists,
our armed forces, our diplomacy
for the equalities on which we insist – whether race or gender or LGBT or the
right of every girl in the world to 12 years of quality education
and for the values we stand for around the world
Everyone knows the values that flag represents
It stands for freedom and free speech and habeas corpus and the rule of law
and above all it stands for democracy
and that is why we will come out of the EU on October 31
because in the end Brexit was a fundamental decision by the British people
that they wanted their laws made by people that they can elect
and they can remove from office
and we must now respect that decision
and create a new partnership with our European friends – as warm and as close

and as affectionate as possible

and the first step is to repeat unequivocally our guarantee to the 3.2 m EU nationals now living and working among us

and I say directly to you – thank you for your contribution to our society

thank you for your patience and I can assure you that under this government you will get the absolute certainty of the rights

to live and remain

And next I say to our friends in Ireland, and in Brussels and around the EU

I am convinced that we can do a deal

without checks at the Irish border, because we refuse under any circumstances to have such checks

and yet without that anti-democratic backstop

and it is of course vital at the same time that we prepare for the remote possibility

that Brussels refuses any further to negotiate

and we are forced to come out with no deal

not because we want that outcome – of course not

but because it is only common sense to prepare

and let me stress that there is a vital sense in which those preparations cannot be wasted

and that is because under any circumstances we will need to get ready

at some point in the near future

to come out of the EU customs union and out of regulatory control

fully determined at last to take advantage of brexit

because that is the course on which this country is now set

with high hearts and growing confidence we will now accelerate the work of getting ready

and the ports will be ready and the banks will be ready

and the factories will be ready

and business will be ready

and the hospitals will be ready

and our amazing food and farming sector will be ready and waiting to continue selling

ever more not just here but around the world

and don't forget that in the event of a no deal outcome we will have the extra lubrication of the £39 bn

and whatever deal we do we will prepare this autumn for an economic package to boost British business and to lengthen this country's lead as the number one destination in this continent for overseas investment

and to all those who continue to prophesy disaster

I say yes – there will be difficulties

though I believe that with energy and application they will be far less serious than some have claimed

but if there is one thing that has really sapped the confidence of business over the last three years

it is not the decisions we have taken

it is our refusal to take decisions

and to all those who say we cannot be ready

I say do not underestimate this country

Do not underestimate our powers of organisation and our determination

because we know the enormous strengths of this economy

in life sciences, in tech, in academia, in music, the arts, culture, financial services,

It is here in Britain that we are using gene therapy, for the first time, to treat the most common form of blindness

here in Britain that we are leading the world in the battery technology that will help cut CO2 and tackle climate change

and produce green jobs for the next generation

and as we prepare for a post-Brexit future it is time we looked not at the risks but at the opportunities that are upon us

so let us begin work now to create freeports that will drive growth and thousands of high-skilled jobs in left behind areas

let's start now to liberate the UK's extraordinary bioscience sector from anti genetic modification rules

and let's develop the blight-resistant crops that will feed the world

let's get going now on our own position navigation and timing satellite and earth observation systems – UK assets orbiting in space with all the long term strategic and commercial benefits for this country

Let's change the tax rules to provide extra incentives to invest in capital and research

and let's promote the welfare of animals that has always been so close to the hearts of the British people

and yes, let's start now on those free trade deals

because it is free trade that has done more than anything else to lift billions out of poverty

all this and more we can do now and only now, at this extraordinary moment in our history

and after three years of unfounded self-doubt it is time to

change the record

to recover our natural and historic role as an enterprising, outward-looking and truly global Britain, generous in temper and engaged with the world

No one in the last few centuries has succeeded in betting against the pluck and nerve and ambition of this country

They will not succeed today

We in this government will work flat out to give this country the leadership it deserves

and that work begins now

Thank you very much