

Foreign Secretary Introduction to Queen's Speech Debate

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

On the 12 December the British people had their say, they delivered a clear majority for this Government, and a mandate to take Britain forward.

That mandate, set out in the Queen's Speech, marks a bold new chapter for our country – ambitious, self-confident and global in its international outlook.

Mr Speaker, we're leaving the EU in 18 days' time, but we vow to be the strongest of European neighbours and allies.

We're taking back control of our laws, but we're also expanding our global horizons to grasp the enormous opportunities of free trade.

And whilst we will always serve the interests of the small businesses and the citizens of this country, we also look to reinforce our national mission as a force for good in the world.

And Mr. Speaker, the UK will leave the EU at the end of this month because the House has passed the EU Withdrawal Bill at 3rd reading with a majority of 99 – which of course is the strongest signal to the EU and the world about our ambition and resolve as we chart the course ahead.

That clarity of purpose now gives us the opportunity to be masters of our own destiny and chart our own course that's independent but working very closely with our international partners.

We will strive with our European friends to secure the best possible arrangements for our future relationship by the end of 2020.

A new relationship that honours the will of the people in the 2016 referendum, but cherishes the trade, security and all other fields of cooperation we have with our European friends.

Mr. Speaker, as we enter this decade of renewal, the Government will engage in a thorough and careful review of the UK's place in the world.

Including through the Integrated Security, Defence and Foreign Policy Review.

It is an opportunity for us to reassess the ways we engage on the global stage, including in defence, diplomacy and our approach to development, to ensure we have a fully integrated strategy.

And, as we conduct that review, our guiding lights will remain the values of free trade, democracy, human rights and the international rule of law.

We will strengthen our historic trading ties, as we leave the EU, whilst

boosting UK competitiveness by tapping wider global markets.

We want strong trade with our existing EU partners, they are important and valuable as a market for us – I don't think that anyone doubts that.

And we are making good progress in paving the way for our first round of future free trade agreements with the rest of the world.

When I was out in the US, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told me that the US is poised "at the doorstep, pen in hand", ready to sign a deal.

A Free Trade Deal with the US would boost businesses, create jobs, reduce the cost of living and expand consumer choice on both sides of the Atlantic. So there is a huge opportunity for a win-win deal.

It is also, at the same time, important we broaden our horizons to embrace the huge opportunities in the rising economies of the future, from Asia to Latin America.

And we set out our stall as global champions of free trade, not just bilaterally but in the WTO as well.

And Mr. Speaker, a truly Global Britain is about more than just international trade and investment, important as those things are for our prosperity and the quality of life for this country.

But Global Britain is also about continuing to uphold our values of liberal democracy and our heartfelt commitment to the international rule of law – values for which we are respected the world over.

We will continue to be a leading member of NATO, ensuring that the Alliance can rise to new challenges ahead.

We will hold Iran accountable for its destabilising and dangerous actions in the region, but also we will encourage it to de-escalate, and seek a path to an alternative future through diplomatic dialogue.

We will call out those who flout international law.

Like the Russian government, from its illegal annexation in Crimea and its chemical weapons attack in Salisbury, to its cyber-attacks and propensity for spreading fake news. We will call out those who flout international law.

We will live up to our responsibilities to the people of Hong Kong.

That means supporting their right to peaceful protest and encouraging dialogue on all sides, within the 'one country, two systems' framework that China has consistently advocated since the Sino-British Joint Declaration in 1984, a treaty which holds international obligations on all sides.

And we will use our moral compass to champion causes that know no borders.

This year, we have the opportunity to host the UN Climate Change Summit –

COP26 – in Glasgow, the UK's chance to demonstrate global leadership on climate change.

Under the Conservatives, we're the first country to legislate to end our contribution to global warming.

And this Government knows that we must leave the environment in a better state for our children.

We will harness British expertise, technology, innovation, and the entrepreneurialism that this country is so great at, to find creative solutions so that we leave our precious environment in a better state for the next generation.

And Mr. Speaker, this Government is proud to maintain our commitment to spending 0.7% of GNI on international development.

We want to support developing countries to stand on their own two feet.

So we're helping them strengthen their economies, make peace, forge security arrangements that are sustainable, so their people are healthier and have better living standards.

We shouldn't be shy about the work we are doing. We're proud of our role in working to eliminate preventable deaths and overcome diseases like Ebola and malaria.

And we'll be there for those who need our help the most, in their hour of need.

As we demonstrated with our world-leading humanitarian response capability, which was put into action in the Bahamas following Hurricane Dorian.

And being a force for good in the world means championing basic human rights.

We are leading global action to help provide 12 years of quality education for all girls by 2030, so no girl is left behind. And all their potential is tapped and they can realise their ambitions individually and for their countries.

We're proud to continue our work on defending Media Freedom, alongside Canada.

I was in Montreal talking about this last week with my Canadian opposite number.

Led by our two countries, we are working with partners around the world to create legislative protections for journalists, support individual journalists at risk, and increase the accountability for those who threaten those whose work shines a light on the conflicts and tyranny around the world.

We are dedicated to shielding those with the courage to speak truth to power.

On Thursday, in Montreal, the Canadian Foreign Minister Francoise-Philippe Champagne and I announced a new Global Award for Media Freedom.

To recognise those who defend journalists and keep the flame of freedom alive in the darkest corners of the world.

Not just because we want to protect them individually, but because transparency and getting the stories out, and holding those regimes to account, and often non-government actors to account, can only happen if we get the facts, and the journalists do an incredibly brave job in getting those into the public domain.

And once we've left the EU and regained control of our own sanctions rules, this government will implement the 'Magnitsky' provisions of the UK Sanctions Act.

That will give us a powerful new tool to hold the perpetrators of the worst human rights abuses to account.

Mr. Speaker, from our brave armed forces serving on the front line, to the diplomats nurturing our relations with nations around the world, and the aid workers providing life-saving support to those who need it most, British foreign policy will of course serve the citizens of our country.

We're proud of our ability to make a difference to the poorest, the oppressed, the most vulnerable around the world, and we will continue that effort every day of every week.

Because, that is our calling as a country.

And that is the mission of this Conservative Government.

Further information