

New Year's message

2018 teems with opportunity.

Technology is driving amazing change. Robotics, artificial intelligence, social media and the internet are the children of today's digital age. They offer us scope to achieve more, understand more, relate to each other better. They offer the UK the chance to be a digital pioneer and a global exploiter of the scope for positive change these ideas allow.

The UK is well set to be a leader of the knowledge based businesses that are the hallmark of the digital world. With world class universities, a capacity to set up small businesses easily and quickly, with flexible entrepreneurial people and a willingness to experiment, the UK can prosper from innovation.

Restoring our ability to govern ourselves and to provide the legal and social framework we need to succeed in this exciting era is part of our mission for 2018 into 2019. Brexit offers us scope to grow more of our own food, to control our own fishery, to make laws that support and help entrepreneurs whilst ensuring high standards, and to develop our global role with Agreements and Treaties as we see fit. The UK will return to the top tables in areas like Trade, the Environment and business regulation, expressing views and helping shape the global standards that increasingly dominate.

Across the Atlantic the Republicans in Congress are aiming to speed their economic growth and to make the USA a magnet for investment by lowering tax rates. This will provide a welcome boost to world activity, and act as a reminder of the need to set competitive tax rates to allow jobs to grow and prosperity to flourish.

The world is a better place for less military intervention in the Middle East by the western powers, and for the planned withdrawal of Russia from Syria. It will not of itself stop all the Middle Eastern civil and religious strife, but it will remove some of the complications in the conflicts. I would like to see a period of relative peace when the west turns swords into helpful robots. We can help transform the world by economic growth, technology and greater investment.

I wish you all a peaceful and prosperous New Year.