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Britain must rediscover its bulldog spirit

Let's not be cowed by Europe over the Galileo satellite programme: we can build our own version

GAVIN WILLIAMSON

Today we celebrate Victory in Europe Day and mark the triumphant moment when Britain defeated Nazi darkness and brought the light of freedom to millions. It was a momentous day in our history but also a defining one for our future. Crucial to that victory was not just our strength and spirit as an independent nation, but our ability to build alliances by calling on old friends and counting on new ones, too. We've been building those alliances ever since, whether that be Nato – the cornerstone of European security – our unrivalled partnership with the US, or the Commonwealth and many others. Britain has always been at the forefront of global affairs – upholding British values of democracy, freedom, and justice, as well as bringing peace, security, and salvation to millions. As we leave the EU, some have questioned whether this is a signal of Britain's retreat into isolation. They could not be more wrong. I speak to people around the country about the EU referendum result and it is clear to me that, whether they voted to remain or leave, they share a common goal: they want Britain to be a beacon of liberty and light. They share the same aspirations for our country to increase global prosperity, to grow international trade, and to forge alliances with like-minded nations all over the world. They believe in Britain and they believe in the British people. Given these shared desires, we need to focus on what unites us, not what divides us. We are a nation of internationalists. We are a country of ground-breaking innovation, unparalleled creativity and resilience that makes a difference to the world every single day. From the railways to the World Wide Web, Britain has been bringing people closer together for centuries, driving up living standards, and changing the world for the better. Britain is revered for what we have achieved and for what we will go on to achieve. That's why we have to see Brexit not as a problem but as an opportunity. Similarly the hangover from the interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan has meant there is an apprehension in some quarters about Britain's willingness to act, creating a mistaken perception of dwindling influence. Some have even argued we should step off the stage and stop playing our part. But as we look to Britain beyond Brexit, let's not apologise for having consistently stood up for freedom. Britain will always do what is right. We are again at a pivotal moment not just in our history but for our future. Now is not the time to be timid, but to rediscover the bulldog spirit that has repeatedly seen us through good times and bad. We need to be bold and we need to be brave. Questions over our participation in the Galileo satellite programme are a perfect example of how there is an abundance of opportunity out there. We should not fear or doubt our ability to go it alone or to seek out new partnerships with countries such as Japan, South Korea, Australia and others. We have the expertise, the technical know-how and, crucially, the will to succeed. That's why it is right that our brilliant defence scientists and military experts have started work scoping out the possibilities of developing our own satellite system while we continue talks with the European Commission over our future role in Galileo. And we won't rule out working with other nations. Likewise, I recently launched our new Combat Air Strategy with industry to look at our next generation of fighter jets. This will underpin our combat aerospace sector for a generation. For it to succeed we need to be ambitious and imaginative. That means exploring all the options, not just thinking about collaborating with traditional partners such as France or Germany but turning to new markets and seeking out opportunities as they open up. In good times Britain, innovation has to be the rule not the exception, expanding our global reach, and cementing our position as a leading international player. When you consider what this country has achieved in times of war, depression, and global instability, we should be extremely optimistic about what we can achieve today and tomorrow. Let's be proud of those achievements and ambitious about what's to come. It is our destiny to be a global force for good. When critics say something cannot be done, the British people defy them, and today – VE Day – is a powerful reminder of that. Let's seize this moment and not just build the nation we aspire to be, but be the Britain we know we can be.

Gavin Williamson is Defence Secretary

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson writes for the Daily Telegraph: "Britain is revered for what we have achieved and for what we will go onto achieve"

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On Sunday with Paterson, Deputy Chairman James Cleverly explains that Conservative councils deliver better local services at less money than Labour councils. Vote for your local Conservatives on May 3rd

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On [#Marr](#) this morning, Conservative Party Chairman Brandon Lewis sets out what this Thursday's local elections are all about. For better services and lower taxes vote for your local Conservatives on 3rd May

Conservative Party Chairman Brandon Lewis writes for the Daily...

Vote Conservative to look after your local interests

NEXT week on Thursday May 3, you get to choose who runs your local services and how much you'll have to pay for them. Local elections are important because your council decides on everything from how often your bins are collected to how often your street is cleaned and roads are repaired. These might seem small in the grand scheme of things but they have a big effect on people's everyday lives.

So if you care about your street being swept, having good schools and how much you pay for council tax, then go out next Thursday and vote for Conservative candidates.

Around the country it's Conservative councils who are delivering good services while managing taxpayers' money to keep your council tax down. In England, Conservative councils charge on average around £100 less than Labour or the Lib Dems for council tax. As Conservatives we know that we can only deliver the services residents want with the money from hardworking taxpayers, so it's always our priority to manage that money effectively.

Take a look at Manchester. The Conservative-run Trafford council has the lowest council tax in Greater Manchester and is investing £15million to fix every road and pavement in the borough. Ninety-three per cent of schools in Trafford are now rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, meaning children there can get the best start in life.

IN THE Midlands, since taking control of Dudley council last year, the Conservatives have introduced two hours free car parking, reversed Labour's street cleaning cuts and scrapped Labour's plan to charge for green bin collections. That's just in the space of one year.

In London, the Conservative councils of Wandsworth and Westminster charge the lowest council tax in the entire country, half that of their neighbouring Labour boroughs. Yet they are delivering the services residents want.

Wandsworth has this year invested £150million in the biggest council-house building programme in the country to deliver good homes for local residents.

In Westminster they have kept all of their libraries open and collect the bins twice a week. And both boroughs have



YOU DECIDE: Next week we elect our local councils and the choice is a clear one



Brandon Lewis
Chairman of the Conservative Party

more than 96 per cent of their schools rated as good or outstanding. They show what Conservative councils achieve day-in, day-out. Good services and low council tax, ensuring residents keep more of the money they earn.

It can become easy to think that things such as low council tax, regular bin collections and clean streets are the norm if you've lived for years under a Conservative council. But having travelled across the country since becoming Conservative Party Chairman, I can tell you they're not. These services will continue only if you vote Conservative next week.

We only have to look at what's happening in Labour councils throughout the country to see what can happen. In Labour-run Birmingham, rubbish has piled up in the streets as bins have gone uncollected.

In Ashford in Nottinghamshire, Labour spent £3million shrinking bins in a botched attempt to increase recycling. But recycling there hasn't gone up at all and fly tipping has

rocketed by more than a third. Even the local Labour councillors there have had enough. An incredible eight of them have quit Labour over the past month alone.

They know what I know: Labour councils charge people more, waste money and run services badly. And it could get worse. From Leeds to London to Liverpool, the hard-Left Momentum group are seizing control of Labour. And we know the hard-Left ideology they want to impose on people. They have called for an eye-watering 20 per cent hike in council tax across the board, backed by some of Jeremy Corbyn's closest allies.

They have blocked housing regeneration and much needed new homes, purely because their hard-Left ideology is set against practical solutions. In London and from Brighton to Cornwall they have hounded out moderate Labour council leaders who have dared to disagree and put residents' needs first. They support his strikes, leaving rubbish uncollected.

'Labour councils run services badly'

And it's not just overflowing bins that Labour will give you. The truth is the country can't afford a Labour government, nor can we afford to elect Labour councils. Labour are not just clueless when it comes to running our economy and supporting local businesses, they are also failing to bring communities together.

JEREMY CORBYN's lack of leadership in dealing with anti-Semitism in his party and his willingness to look the other way tells us all we need to know. He has allowed the hard-Left to take over Labour councils and will not act to stop anti-Semitism in the Labour Party from growing.

So the choice for Daily Express readers is clear: Conservative councillors delivering for your community, providing good local services while keeping your council tax low. Or Labour leaving you with less money in your pocket and worse services in your area.

In some areas, the difference between a Conservative and Labour council could come down to just a handful of votes. So I urge all of you to get out and vote. These elections are important and your vote really will make a difference.

Next Thursday will determine the future of your everyday local services. Don't risk waking up on Friday with a Labour council in charge of them.

Conservative Party Chairman Brandon Lewis writes for the Daily Express today:

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Business Secretary Greg Clark and Culture Secretary Matt Hancock write for today's Times Red Box: "Britain has always led the development of artificial intelligence and today shows this will only continue in the years to come"