



David Cameron

Member of Parliament for Witney
Prime Minister and Leader of the Conservative Party

This week, in Manchester, this party has shown the discipline, the unity, and the purpose that is the mark of a party of government. I'm proud of my team, I'm proud of our members, I'm proud to lead this party – but most of all, I'm proud of you.

People have very clear instructions for this government:

“Lead us out of this economic mess.”

“Do it in a way that's fair and right.”

“And as you do it, make sure you build something worthwhile for us and our children.”

Clear instructions. Clear objectives. And from me: a clear understanding that in these difficult times, it is leadership we need. To get our economy moving. To get our society working, and in a year – the Olympics year – when the world will be watching us, to show everyone what Great Britain really means.

But first I want to say something to you in this hall. Thank you. Despite the predictions we won elections all over the country this May, so let's hear it for those great campaigns you fought and the great results you achieved.

And thank you for something else. In the AV referendum, you did Britain a service and kicked that useless voting system off the political agenda for decades to come.

And next year let's make sure we back Boris, beat Ken and keep London Conservative. You're not just winners – you're doers.

This summer, as before, Conservatives went to Rwanda to build classrooms, teach children and help grow businesses. Social action: that is the spirit of the modern Conservative Party.

This is a party - ours is a country – that never walks on by. Earlier this year some people said to me: “Libya's not our concern”, “don't start what you can't finish”, and even – “Arabs don't do democracy.” But if we had stood aside this spring, people in Benghazi would have been massacred. And don't let anyone say this wasn't in our national interest. Remember what Qadhafi did. He's the man who gave Semtex to the IRA, who was behind the shooting of a police officer in a London square, who was responsible for the bombing of a plane in the skies over Lockerbie. Let's be proud of the part we played in giving the Libyan people the chance to take back their country.

In Afghanistan today, there are men and women fighting for Britain as bravely as any in our history. They come from across our country: England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland. They now have the equipment they need. And we're on target to bring them home by the end of 2014.

There's been a campaign of incredible courage and sacrifice, and I know everyone in this hall will want to send a message to everyone who serves and who have served. Those in uniform in our armed forces and in our police. And those not in uniform, keeping us safe from terrorism on our streets.

We're proud of you. We salute you. Thank you.

But leadership in the world is about moral strength as much as military might. A few months ago I was in Nigeria, on a trade mission. While I was there, I visited a vaccination clinic. It was very hot, pretty basic and the lights kept going off.

But to the rows of women, cuddling their babies, this place was a godsend. One of the nurses told me that if it wasn't for British aid, many of those beautiful babies would be dead. In four years' time, this country will have helped vaccinate more of the world's poorest children than there are people in the whole of England.

Of course, we'll make sure your money goes to the people who need it most, and we'll do it in a way that's transparent and accountable. But I really believe, despite all our difficulties, that this is the right thing to do. That it's a mark of our country, and our people, that we never turn our backs on the world's poorest, and everyone in Britain can be incredibly proud of it.

Leadership in fighting poverty. Leadership in fighting tyranny. But when it came to that decision to help the Libyan people, there was something dispiriting about the debate here at home. It wasn't that some people thought we shouldn't do what we did – of course it's everyone's right to disagree.

It was that too many thought Britain actually *couldn't* do something like that any more. And you hear that kind of pessimism about our economic future, our social problems, our political system. That our best days are behind us. That we're on a path of certain decline.

Well I'm here to tell you that it isn't true. Of course, if we sit around and hope for the best, the rest will leave us behind. If we fool ourselves that we can grow our economy, mend our society, give our children the future we want them to have. If we fool ourselves that we can do these things without effort, without correcting past mistakes, without confronting vested interests and failed ideas, then no, we're not going to get anywhere.

But if we put in the effort, correct those mistakes, confront those vested interests and take on the failed ideas of the past, then I know we can turn this ship around.

Nobody wants false optimism. And I will never pretend there are short cuts to success. But success will come: with the right ideas, the right approach, the right leadership. Leadership from government: to set out the direction we must take, and the choices we must make. But leadership also from you. Because the things that will really deliver success are not politicians or government. It's the people of Britain, and the spirit of Britain.

Some say that to succeed in this world, we need to become more like India, or China, or Brazil. I say: we need to become more like us. The real us. Hard-working, pioneering, independent, creative, adaptable, optimistic, can-do. That's the spirit that has made this United Kingdom what it is: a small

country that does great things; one of the most incredible success stories in the history of the world.

And it's a spirit that's alive and well today. I see it in Tania Sidney-Roberts, the head teacher I met in Norwich who started a free school from scratch, now four times over-subscribed. Her ambition? To set up another school and do it all over again. That's leadership.

I see it in the group of GPs in Bexley who have taken more control of their budgets, and got their patients – some of the poorest in the country – free care on Harley Street. Their ambition? To cut waiting times, cut costs and improve care – all in one go. That's leadership.

And we all saw it this summer. Dan Thompson watched the riots unfold on television. But he didn't sit there and say 'the council will clean it up.' He got on the internet. He sent out a call. And with others, he started a social movement.

People picked up their brooms and reclaimed their streets. So the argument I want to make today is simple: leadership works. I know how tough things are. I don't for one minute underestimate how worried people feel, whether about making ends meet, or the state of the world economy. But the truth is, right now we need to be energised, not paralysed by gloom and fear.

Half the world is booming – let's go and sell to them. So many of our communities are thriving – let's make the rest like them. There's so much that's great about our country. We don't have to accept that success in this century automatically belongs to someone else. We just have to remember the origin of our achievements: the people of Britain, taking a lead. That's why so much of my leadership is about unleashing your leadership. Giving everyone who wants to seize it the opportunity, the support and above all the freedom to get things done. Giving everyone who wants to believe it the confidence that working hard and taking responsibility will be rewarded not punished.

So let's reject the pessimism. Let's bring on the can-do optimism. Let's summon the energy and the appetite to fight for a better future for our country, Great Britain.

Of course that starts with our economy. As we meet here in Manchester, the threat to the world economy – and to Britain - is as serious today as it was in 2008 when world recession loomed. The Eurozone is in crisis, the French and German economies have slowed to a standstill; even mighty America is being questioned about her debts.

It is an anxious time. Prices and bills keep going up – petrol, the weekly shop, electricity. On the news it's job losses, cutbacks, closures. You think about tuition fees, and house prices, the cost of a deposit, and wonder how our children will cope. Of course, government can help – and this one is. We have cut petrol duty, kept the winter fuel allowance and kept cold weather payments. We froze council tax this year, and as George announced in that great speech on Monday, we're going to freeze it again next year too.

But we need to tell the truth about the overall economic situation. People understand that when the economy goes into recession, times get tough. But normally, after a while, things pick up. Strong growth returns. People get back into work. This time, it's not like that. And people want to know why the good times are so long coming.

The answer is straightforward, but uncomfortable. This was no normal recession; we're in a debt crisis. It was caused by too much borrowing, by individuals, businesses, banks, and most of all, governments. When you're in a debt crisis, some of the normal things that government can do, to

deal with a normal recession, like borrowing to cut taxes or increase spending - these things won't work because they lead to more debt, which would make the crisis worse.

Why? Because it risks higher interest rates, less confidence and the threat of even higher taxes in future. The only way out of a debt crisis is to deal with your debts. That's why households are paying down their credit card and store card bills. It means banks getting their books in order. And it means governments – all over the world - cutting spending and living within their means.

This coalition government, Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, Nick Clegg and I – we've led the way here in Britain. Our plan is right. And our plan will work. I know you can't see it or feel it yet. But think of it like this. The new economy we're building: it's like building a house. The most important part is the part you can't see – the foundations that make it stable. Slowly, but surely, we're laying the foundations for a better future. But this is the crucial point: it will only work if we stick with it.

And there's something else we've got to stick to. Because we're not in the Euro, we can lay these foundations ourselves: on our own terms; in our own way. So let me say this: as long as I'm Prime Minister, we will never join the Euro. And I won't let us be sucked into endless bail-outs of countries that are in the Euro either. Yes, we're leading members of the IMF and have our responsibilities there.

But when it comes to any Euro bail-out mechanism, my approach is simple: Labour got us into it and I've made sure we're getting out of it.

Of course, our deficit reduction programme is just one big bail-out of the last Labour government. This past year we've been subjected to a sort of national apology tour by Labour. Sorry for sucking up to Qadhafi. For not regulating the banks properly. For crushing civil liberties. For failing to go green. For not building enough homes. For the infighting that made them the most dysfunctional government ever.

But you know what? Nothing – not a peep – on the thing they really need to say sorry for. Wasting billions and billions of your money. No apology for that. You know what the Shadow Chancellor, Ed Balls claimed last week? That Labour didn't spend more money than they had "available". Hello? Ed – you spent £428 billion more than you had "available". There is only one conclusion you can rationally draw. We must never let these Labour politicians anywhere near our economy again.

As before, it falls to us to clear up after the Labour Party. I have insisted that we do it in a way that is fair. You can't cut a deficit the size of ours without everyone making a sacrifice. But those with the most money are bearing the biggest burden. We've imposed a permanent levy on the banks, getting them to pay more every year than Labour did in one year.

We've raised taxes on people who make their money overseas but live here. At the same time we've given real help to the poorest and most vulnerable. We're taking over a million of the lowest-paid people out of tax altogether. And after the scandal of the 75p pension rise under Labour, we're linking pensions to earnings so elderly people will be £10,000 better off in their retirement.

Yes, this is a one-nation deficit reduction plan – from a one-nation party. And here's something else that we – yes we – have done. The NHS is the most precious institution in our country – to my family, to your family. At the last election, it was Labour policy to cut the NHS. It was Liberal Democrat policy to cut the NHS.

It was our policy – Conservative policy – to protect the NHS and spend more on it this year, next year and the year after that because we are the party of the NHS, and as long as I'm here we always will be.

But real fairness isn't just about what the state spends. It's about the link between what you put in and what you get out. As we debate what people get from the state, let's remember how we generate taxes. So to the unions planning to strike over public sector pensions I say this. You have every right to protest. But our population is ageing. Our public sector pensions system is unaffordable. The only way to give public sector workers a decent, sustainable pensions system, and do right by the taxpayer, is to ask public servants to work a little longer and contribute a little more. That is fair. What is not fair, what is not right, is going on strikes that will hurt the very people who help pay for your pensions.

Dealing with our debts is line one, clause one of our plan for growth. But it is just the start. We need jobs – and we won't get jobs by growing government, we need to grow our businesses. So here's our growth plan: doing everything we can to help businesses start, grow, thrive, succeed. Where that means backing off, cutting regulation – back off, cut regulation. Where that means intervention, investment – intervene, invest. Whatever it takes to help our businesses take on the world – we'll do it.

The global economy has transformed in recent years. It used to take companies decades to become global giants: now it can take a couple of years. When you step off the plane in Delhi or Shanghai or Lagos, you can feel the energy, the hunger, the drive to succeed. We need that here.

Frankly, there's too much 'can't do' sogginess around. We need to be a sharp, focused, can-do country. But as we go for growth, the last thing I want is to pump the old economy back up, with a banking sector out of control, manufacturing squeezed, and prosperity confined to a few parts of the country and a select few industries. Our plan is to build something new and to build something better. We can do it.

Look what's happening in East London. Europe's financial capital is now matched by Europe's technology capital in Tech City. Facebook, Intel, Google, Cisco – even Silicon Valley Bank - seeing our potential and investing here. Look what's happening across our country. The wings of the world's biggest jumbo jet - built in Wales.

The world's most famous digger – the JCB – made in Staffordshire.

Do you watch Formula One? Well whether it's the German Michael Schumacher, the Australian Mark Webber or the Brazilian Reubens Barrichello, they all have one thing in common – they drive cars built right here in Britain.

This is the new economy we're building: leading in advanced manufacturing, technology, life sciences, green engineering. Inventing, creating, exporting.

Of course, it's easy to talk about these things: harder to deliver it. For a start, you won't deliver it just by dividing industries into saints and sinners. That's not just an insult to the financial and insurance companies, accountancy firms and professional services that make us billions of pounds and create millions of jobs - it's much too simplistic.

As I've always argued, we need businesses to be more socially responsible. But to get proper growth, to rebalance our economy, we've got to put some important new pieces into place. Taking action

now to get credit flowing to the small businesses that are the engine of the economy. And ring-fencing the banks so they fulfil their role of lending safely to the real economy. Setting up Technology and Innovation Centres where scientists and academics can work with entrepreneurs to turn brilliant inventions into successful products. Reforming taxation to encourage enterprise and investment in high growth firms. And sometimes that means taking controversial decisions; challenging vested interests.

When firms need to adapt quickly to win orders and contracts, we can't go on with rigid, outdated employment regulations. The critics may say: what about workers' rights? But the most important worker's right of all is having a job in the first place.

When in modern business you're either quick or you're dead, it's hopeless that our transport infrastructure lags so far behind Europe's. That's why we need to build high speed rail and why we'll get the best super-fast broadband network in Europe too. When a balanced economy needs workers with skills, we need to end the old snobbery about vocational education and training. We've provided funding for 250,000 extra apprenticeships – but not enough big companies are delivering.

So here's a direct appeal: If you want skilled employees, we'll provide the funding, we'll cut the red tape. But you've got to show more leadership and give us the apprenticeships we need.

Unlocking growth and rebalancing our economy also requires change in Brussels. The EU is the biggest single market in the world – but it's not working properly. Almost every day, I see pointless new regulation coming our way. A couple of weeks ago I was up in the flat, going through some work before the start of the day and I saw this EU directive. Do you know what it was about? Whether people with diabetes should be allowed to drive. What's that got to do with the single market? Do you suppose anyone in China is thinking: I know how we'll grow our economy – let's get those diabetics off our roads. Europe has to wake up – and the EU growth plan we've published, backed by eight countries, which I want us to push at every meeting, every council, every summit, is the alarm call that Brussels needs.

There's one more thing. Our businesses need the space to grow – literally. That's one of the reasons we're reforming our planning system. It's hard to blame local people for opposing developments when they get none of the benefits. We're changing that. If a new manufacturing plant is built in your area – your community keeps the business rates. If new homes get built – you keep the council tax. This is a localist plan from a localist party.

Now I know people are worried about what this means for conservation. Let me tell you: I love our countryside and there's nothing I would do to put it at risk. But let's get the balance right. The proportion of land in England that is currently built up is 9 per cent. Yes, 9 per cent. There are businesses out there desperate to expand, to hire thousands of people – but they're stuck in the mud of our planning system. Of course we're open to constructive ideas about how to get this right.

But to those who just oppose everything we're doing, my message is this: Take your arguments down to the job centre. We've got to get Britain back to work.

The new economy we're building must work for everyone. You know the real tragedy of New Labour's economy? Not just that it was unsustainable, unbalanced, overwhelmed with debt. But that it left so many behind.

Labour talked opportunity but ripped the ladders of opportunity away. We had an education system that left hundreds of thousands unprepared for work. A welfare system that trapped millions in

dependency. An immigration system that brought in migrant workers to do the jobs that those on welfare were being paid not to do.

We had a housing system that failed to meet demand, so prices shot up and fuelled an unsustainable boom. And we had a government that creamed the taxes off the boom to splurge back into benefits – redoubling the failure all over again. Labour: who tell us they care so much about fairness, about justice, who say they want to hit the rich and help the poor - it was Labour gave us the casino economy and the welfare society.

So who's going to lift the poorest up? Who's going to get our young people back to work? Who's going to create a more equal society? No, not you, the self-righteous Labour Party. It will be us, the Conservatives who finally build an economy that works for everyone and gives hope to everyone in our country.

That starts with a good education – for everyone. It sounds so simple: proper teaching, good discipline, rigorous exams. But it's hard. It's hard because our education system has been infected by an ideology that instead of insisting on every child's success has too often made excuses for failure. They said: "poor kids can't learn." "Black boys can't do well." "In this community we really mustn't expect too much - don't you understand?"

Oh yes, I do understand. Believe me I do understand and I am disgusted by the idea that we should aim for any less for a child from a poor background than a rich one. I have contempt for the notion that we should accept narrower horizons for a black child than a white one. Yes it's the age-old irony of the liberal left: they practice oppression and call it equality.

So we are fighting back. And something massive is happening. There is now irrefutable proof that the right schools, with the right freedoms and the right leadership, can transform the education of the most deprived children. You heard yesterday from that inspirational student from Burlington Danes Academy in Hammersmith. Inner city school. Deprived area. Nearly half the pupils on free school meals.

But this year, three-quarters got five good GCSEs including English and maths. That's way better than what the majority of the state schools in Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Hampshire got last year – some of the most affluent counties in the country.

Why? Because the head teacher, her staff, the parents – rose up and said: "We are as good as anyone. Our children can achieve anything."

Leadership works. So we're backing more head teachers to turn schools into Academies. And we want more parents, teachers, charities, businesses, entrepreneurs, to come in to our education system and set up Academies and Free Schools.

Change really is underway. For the first time in a long time, the numbers studying those core and vital subjects history, geography, languages are going up. Pupils' exams will be marked on their punctuation and grammar. And teachers are going to be able to search pupils' bags for anything banned in school – mobile phones, alcohol, weapons, anything. It's a long, hard road back to rigour, but we're well and truly on our way.

And here's something else we're going to do. In Britain today, we have schools that are intolerant of failure, where ninety percent of pupils get five good GCSEs. Yes: private schools. You've heard me talk about social responsibility so let me say this. I want to see private schools start Academies, and

sponsor Academies in the state system. Wellington College does it, Dulwich does it – others can too. The apartheid between our private and state schools is one of the biggest wasted opportunities in our country today. So let it be this party that helps tear it down.

Rigour back in learning. Standards back in schools. Teachers back in control. Yes – the Conservatives are back in government.

An economy that works for everyone means sorting out welfare and immigration too. Welfare began as a life-line. For too many it's become a way of life. Generation after generation in the cycle of dependency – and we are determined to break it.

Part of our answer is controlling immigration. So we've put a cap on the numbers of non-EU immigrants allowed to come into our country to work. We mustn't lock out talent - I want the best and brightest entrepreneurs, scientists and students from around the world to get the red carpet treatment. But the bogus colleges, the fake marriages, the people arriving for a month and staying for years, the criminals who use the Human Rights Act to try and stay in the country – we are clamping down on all of them.

We've got to get some sense back into our labour market and get British people back into work. For years you've been conned by governments. To keep the unemployment figures down, they've parked as many people as possible on the sick. Two and a half million, to be exact. Not officially unemployed, but claiming welfare, no questions asked. Now we're asking those questions. It turns out that of the 1.3 million people who have put in a claim for the new sickness benefit in recent years, one million are either able to work, or stopped their claim before their medical assessment had been completed.

Under Labour they got something for nothing. With us they'll only get something, if they give something. If they are prepared to work, we're going to help them – and I mean really help them. If you've been out of work and on benefits for five years, a quick session down the job centre and a new CV just isn't going to cut it. You need to get your self-esteem and confidence back; you need training and skills; intensive personal support.

Previous governments were never willing to make a proper commitment to this, but we have – investing now, so we don't pay later. We're going to spend up to £14,000 on some people just to get them trained and back into work. Yes, I know that's a lot of money – but it's worth it. Let it be us, let it be this government that finally builds an economy where no one is left behind.

And for most people that includes a home of their own: not just any old home but a decent one: light and spacious, a place with a proper front door and room for the kids to play in. But the percentage of British people who own their home is going down. Unless they get help from their parents, do you know the average age of a first-time buyer in our country today? Thirty seven. You hear people say: "why can't people just rent like in Europe?" or "there's nothing we can do because we don't have the money."

I disagree. The failure of the housing market is bound up in the debt crisis. Because lenders won't lend, builders won't build and buyers can't buy. We're sorting this out, bringing back the Right to Buy and using the money to build new homes. Macmillan made us the party of the property-owning democracy. Margaret Thatcher gave people the Right to Buy. Now let us, in this generation, inspire a new Tory housing revolution.

While I'm on the subject of those great Conservative figures, let me say this. I'm incredibly fortunate

to have such strong support from our previous leaders. Michael Howard. Iain Duncan Smith. William Hague. Sir John Major. And of course, Lady Thatcher. You know what? We don't boo our leaders. We're proud of our past and what those people did for our country.

A few months ago, we were shocked by the scenes on our streets in London and other parts of the country. But perhaps the most shocking thing is that people weren't that surprised. There was no great call for a public enquiry to find out what had gone wrong. Instead the sound you could hear was the angry, insistent, overwhelming cry of a country shouting to its leaders: We know. We know why this happened. We know what's gone wrong. We know that if the system keeps fudging the difference between right and wrong, we'll never improve behaviour. We know that as long as the police go round with one hand tied behind their back, we'll never make our streets truly safe. And more than anything we know that if parents don't meet their responsibilities, kids will get out of control. Yes, people said: we know what's gone wrong: and we want you to put it right.

One thing people want is speedy justice. After the riots those responsible were put straight in the courts and tough sentences were quickly handed out. And I've made it clear to the police, to the prosecution services, to the Ministry of Justice, to the Attorney-General, if we could do that then, let's make sure we do it all the time. But the problems go deeper. That's why my driving mission in politics is to build a Big Society, a stronger society.

It starts with families. I want to make this the most family-friendly government the country has ever seen. More childcare. More health visitors. More relationship support. More help with parenting. And for the 120,000 families that are most troubled – and causing the most trouble – a commitment to turn their lives around by the end of this Parliament.

Today I can announce this: a new focus on the 65,000 children in care. Do you know how many children there are in care under the age of one? 3,660. And how many children under the age of one were adopted in our country last year? Sixty. This may not seem like the biggest issue facing our country, but it is the biggest issue for these children. How can we have let this happen: we've got people flying all over the world to adopt babies, while the care system at home agonises about placing black children with white families.

With the right values and the right effort, let's end this scandal and help these, the most vulnerable children of all. But for me, leadership on families also means speaking out on marriage. Marriage is not just a piece of paper. It pulls couples together through the ebb and flow of life. It gives children stability. And it says powerful things about what we should value. So yes, we will recognise marriage in the tax system.

But we're also doing something else. I once stood before a Conservative conference and said it shouldn't matter whether commitment was between a man and a woman, a woman and a woman, or a man and another man. You applauded me for that. Five years on, we're consulting on legalising gay marriage.

And to anyone who has reservations, I say: Yes, it's about equality, but it's also about something else: commitment. Conservatives believe in the ties that bind us; that society is stronger when we make vows to each other and support each other. So I don't support gay marriage despite being a Conservative. I support gay marriage because I'm a Conservative.

We value community spirit and social action too. We see it everyday in our own lives, it's one of the great things about Britain, and do you know what? Over the last five years of the Labour government, the number of people volunteering went down. Last year, the decline was halted.

And now the proportion of people saying they feel they belong strongly to their neighbourhood is the highest for a decade. If you're cynical, go to Wythenshawe, a few miles from here. It used to be ravaged by crime and drugs and graffiti. But local people opened a community hall and a gym. They got the kids off the streets. They cleaned up graffiti and kicked out the drug dealers. Of course, government can't legislate for this. But we can support the leadership that makes it happen.

That's why we're giving neighbourhoods new powers to take over the running of parks, playgrounds and pubs. It's why we're making it easier for people to give their time and money to good causes. It's why we want elected mayors in our great cities, and it's why right now we're drawing up plans to really open up public services and give more power to people.

But one of the biggest things holding people back is the shadow of health and safety. I was told recently about a school that wanted to buy a set of highlighter pens. But with the pens came a warning. Not so fast – make sure you comply with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002. Including plenty of fresh air and hand and eye protection. Try highlighting in all that.

This isn't how a great nation was built. Britannia didn't rule the waves with arm-bands on. So the vetting and barring scheme – we're scaling it back. CRB checks – we're cutting them back. At long last common sense is coming back to our country.

Building stronger communities is why we've introduced National Citizen Service. You saw it for yourself at the start of this afternoon's session. One of the people who took part this year, Owen Carter, wrote to me and said:

"[This] has changed my perspective of life - you can do anything if you work hard and have a supportive team around you. You can do anything'.

That's the spirit I'm talking about. That's why we're tripling the scale of National Citizen Service. That's how we'll build our Big Society. That is leadership.

Next year, we welcome the world for the Olympics – and of course the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. These two events say a lot about Britain. Tradition. Modernity. All in one.

And today, we can choose to be a country that's back on its feet and striding forward. Paying down our debt and earning a living. Getting people off welfare and into work. Breaking new ground in education, with excellence for everyone not a privileged few.

We can be a country where people look back on their life and say: I've worked hard, I've raised a family, I'm part of a community and all along it was worth my while. We're too far away from that today but we can get there.

It's not complicated, but not easy either - because nothing worthwhile is easily won. But you know, we've been told we were finished before.

They said when we lost an Empire that we couldn't find a role. But we found a role, took on communism and helped bring down the Berlin Wall.

They called our economy the sick man of Europe. But we came back and turned this country into a beacon of enterprise.

No, Britain never had the biggest population, the largest land mass, the richest resources, but we had the spirit. Remember: it's not the size of the dog in the fight – it's the size of the fight in the dog. Overcoming challenge, confounding the sceptics, reinventing ourselves, this is what we do. It's called leadership.

Let's turn this time of challenge into a time of opportunity. Not sitting around, watching things happen and wondering why. But standing up, making things happen and asking why not.

We have the people, we have the ideas, and now we have a government that's freeing those people, backing those ideas.

So let's see an optimistic future. Let's show the world some fight. Let's pull together, work together. And together lead Britain to better days.