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From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street and The Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP

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## **PM statement on priorities for the government: 25 July 2019. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's statement in the House of Commons on the priorities for the government.**

**Mr Speaker,**

**I with permission, shall make a statement on the mission of this new Conservative Government.**

But before I begin, I am sure the whole House will join me in paying tribute to my Rt Hon Friend the Member for Maidenhead - for all that she has given in the service of our nation.

From fighting modern slavery to tackling the problems of mental ill-health – she has a great legacy on which we shall all be proud to build.

And our mission is to deliver Brexit on the 31st of October for the purpose of uniting and re-energising our great United Kingdom and making this country the greatest place on earth.

And when I say the greatest place on earth, I'm conscious that some may accuse me of hyperbole. But it is useful to imagine the trajectory on which we could now be embarked.

By 2050 it is more than possible that the United Kingdom will be the greatest and most prosperous economy in Europe – at the centre of a new network of trade deals that we have pioneered.

With the road and rail investments we are making and propose to make now – the investment in broadband and 5G – our country will boast the most formidable transport and technological connectivity on the planet.

By unleashing the productive power of the whole United Kingdom - not just of London and the South East but of every corner of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – we will have closed forever the productivity gap and seen to it that no town is left behind ever again; no community ever again forgotten.

Our children and grandchildren will be living longer, happier, healthier, wealthier lives.

Our United Kingdom of 2050 will no longer make any contribution whatsoever to the destruction of our precious planet brought about by carbon emissions – because we will have led the world in delivering that net zero target.

We will be the home of electric vehicles – cars, even planes, powered by British made battery technology being developed right here, right now.

We will have the freeports to revitalise our coastal communities, a bio-science sector liberated from anti genetic modification rules, blight-resistant crops that will feed the world - and the satellite and earth observation systems that are the envy of the world.

We will be the seedbed for the most exciting and most dynamic business investments on the planet.

Our Constitutional settlement, our United Kingdom will be firm, will be secure.

Our Union of nations beyond question.

Our democracy robust.

Our future clean, green, prosperous, united, confident, ambitious – this my friends is the prize, more still the responsibility that it falls on us to fulfil.

And to do so, we must take some immediate steps.

The first is to restore trust in our democracy and fulfil the repeated promises of Parliament to the people by coming out of the European Union – and doing so on October 31st.

I and all ministers in this government are committed to leaving on this date, whatever the circumstances. To do otherwise would cause a catastrophic loss of confidence in our political system. It will leave the British people wondering whether their politicians could ever be trusted again to follow a clear democratic instruction.

I would prefer us to leave the EU with a deal. I would much prefer it. I believe that is still possible even at this late stage and I will work flat out to make it happen. But certain things need to be clear.

The Withdrawal Agreement negotiated by my predecessor has been three times rejected by this House. Its terms are unacceptable to this Parliament and to this country. No country that values its independence and indeed its self-respect could agree to a Treaty which signed away our economic independence and self-government as this backstop does. A time limit is not enough. If an agreement is to be reached it must be clearly understood that the way to the deal goes by way of the abolition of the backstop.

For our part we are ready to negotiate in good faith an alternative, with provisions to ensure that the Irish border issues are dealt with where

they should always have been: in the negotiations on the future agreement between the UK and the EU. I do not accept the argument that says that these issues can only be solved by all or part of the UK remaining in the customs union or in the single market. The evidence is that other arrangements are perfectly possible, and are also perfectly compatible with the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement, to which we are of course steadfastly committed.

I, my team, and my Rt Hon Friend the Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union are ready to meet and to talk on this basis to the Commission or other EU colleagues whenever they are ready to do so. For our part, we will throw ourselves into these negotiations with the greatest energy and determination and in the spirit of friendship.

And I hope that the EU will be equally ready and that they will rethink their current refusal to make any changes to the Withdrawal Agreement.

If they do not, we will of course have to leave the EU without an agreement under Article 50. The UK is better prepared for that situation than many believe. But we are not as ready yet as we should be. In the 98 days that remain to us we must turbo-charge our preparations to make sure that there is as little disruption as possible to our national life. I believe that is possible with the kind of national effort that the British people have made before and will make again. In these circumstances we would, of course, also have available the £39bn in the Withdrawal Agreement to help deal with any consequences.

I have today instructed the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to make these preparations his top priority. I have asked the Cabinet Secretary to mobilise the Civil Service to deliver this outcome should it become necessary. And the Chancellor has confirmed that all necessary funding will be made available.

I will also ensure that preparing for leaving the EU without an agreement under Article 50 is not just about seeking to mitigate the challenges but also about grasping the opportunities. This is not just about technical preparations, vital though they are. It is about having a clear

economic strategy for the UK in all scenarios, something which the Conservative Party has always led the way, and it's about producing policies which will boost the competitiveness and the productivity of our economy when we are free of the EU regulations.

Indeed, Mr Speaker, we will begin right away on working to change the tax rules to provide extra incentives to invest in capital and research.

And we will be now accelerating the talks on those free trade deals.

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

A status that is made possible by the diversity talent and skills of our workforce and,

Mr Speaker, I also want therefore to repeat unequivocally our guarantee to the 3.2 million EU nationals now living and working among us. I thank them for their contribution to our society – and for their patience - and I can assure them that under this government they will have the absolute certainty of the right to live and remain.

Mr Speaker, I want to end by making clear that my commitment to the 31 October date for our exit.

Our national participation in the European Union is coming to an end.

This reality needs to be recognised by all parties.

Indeed, Mr Speaker today there are very many brilliant officials trapped in meeting after meeting in Brussels and Luxembourg when they could be better deploying their talents in preparing to pioneer new trade deals and promoting a truly Global Britain.

I want to start unshackling our officials to undertake this new mission right away.

So we will not nominate a UK Commissioner for the new Commission taking office on 1 November – though clearly this is not intended to stop the EU appointing a new commission.

Mr Speaker, today is the first day of a new approach, which will end with our exit from the EU on 31 October. Then I hope we can have a friendly and constructive relationship – as constitutional equals, as friends, and partners in facing the challenges that lie ahead. I believe that is possible and this government will work to make it so.

But Mr Speaker, we are not going to wait until 31st October to begin building the broader and bolder future that I have described.

We are going to start right away, providing vital funding for our frontline public services, to deliver better healthcare, better education and more police on the streets.

Mr Speaker, I am committed to making sure that the NHS receives the funds that were promised by the last government in June 2018 and that these funds go to frontline as soon as possible. This will include urgent funding for 20 hospital upgrades and winter-readiness. I have asked officials to provide policy proposals for drastically reducing waiting times and for GP appointments.

To address the rise of violent crime in our country I have announced that there will be 20,000 extra police keeping us safe over the next three years, and I have asked my Rt Hon Friend the Home Secretary to ensure this is treated as an absolute priority.

We will give greater powers for the police to use stop and search to help tackle violent crime. I have also tasked officials to draw up proposals to ensure that in future those found guilty of the most serious sexual and violent offences are required to serve a custodial sentence that truly reflects the severity of their offence and policy measures that will see a reduction in the number of prolific offenders.

On education, I have listened to the concerns of many colleagues and we will increase the minimum level of per pupil funding in primary and

secondary schools and return education funding to previous levels by the end of this Parliament.

We are committed to levelling up across every nation and region across the UK, providing support to towns and cities and closing the opportunity gap in our society.

We will announce investment in vital infrastructure, fibre rollout, transport and housing that can improve people's quality of life, fuel economic growth and provide opportunity.

Finally, we will also ensure that we continue to attract the brightest and best talent from around the world. No-one believes more strongly than me in the benefits of migration to our country. But I am clear that our immigration system must change. For years, politicians have promised the public an Australian-style points based system.

And today I will actually deliver on those promises - I will ask the Migration Advisory Committee to conduct a review of that system as the first step in a radical rewriting of our immigration system. I am convinced that we can produce a system that the British public can have confidence in.

Mr Speaker, over these past few years, too many people in this country feel that they have been told repeatedly and relentlessly what we cannot do.

Since I was a child I remember respectable authorities asserting that our time as a nation has passed, that we should be content with mediocrity and managed decline.

And time and again – even the sceptics and doubters - by their powers to innovate and adapt the British people have showed the doubters wrong.

And Mr Speaker I believe that at this pivotal moment in our national story we are going to prove the doubters wrong again.

Not just with positive thinking and a can-do attitude, important though they are.

But with the help and the encouragement government and a Cabinet that is bursting with ideas, ready to create change, determined to implement the policies we need to succeed as a nation.

The greatest place to live

The greatest place to bring up a family

The greatest place to send your kids to school

The greatest place to set up a business or to invest

Because we have the best transport and the cleanest environment and the best healthcare,

And the most compassionate approach to care of elderly people.

That is the mission of the Cabinet I have appointed.

That is the purpose of the government I am leading.

And that is why I believe that if we bend our sinews to the task now,

There is every chance that in 2050,

When I fully intend to be around, though not necessarily in this job we will look back on this period, this extraordinary period, as the beginning of a new golden age for our United Kingdom.

And I commend this future to the House just as much as I commend this statement.

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