

EASTER BANQUET

Mansion House, 27 April 2022

SUMMARY:

The Lord Mayor spoke alongside the Foreign Secretary at the annual Easter Banquet at Mansion House, to an audience of Ambassadors and High Commissioners to the United Kingdom. He condemned Russia's attack on Ukraine as an attack on the international rule of law – the rule of law which is vital for international cooperation.

SPEECH:

Welcome – and indeed, welcome back – to Mansion House.

Happy Easter to you all.

As Lord Mayor, I am delighted to be able to welcome the Ambassadors and High Commissioners to the United Kingdom here once again.

This is the first Easter Banquet we have been able to hold since 2019.

There have been many changes in the diplomatic corps in London over the last three years.

So I would like to offer a warm welcome to all those new to London since we last enjoyed the opportunity to dine together.

I am also delighted to see the His Excellency Khaled Al-Duwaisan - the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps - here, and I look forward to his words of wisdom.

Given the news that you are going to retire this summer, I would like to express my thanks for your extraordinary 29 years of service in London, and for speaking at so many of these banquets over the years.

I am sure I speak for everyone here when I wish you and your wife all the very best for the future.

I am also delighted to be able to welcome my predecessor as Lord Mayor – Sir William Russell – and Hilary, back to Mansion House.

It is lovely to have you back here – Just remember, after two years here, that you will need to leave the house again at the end of the evening.

This banquet is an annual occasion where we bring the Ambassadors and High Commissioners to the United Kingdom together....

To affirm our friendship with you...

To thank you for all that you do to support the relationships between your countries and the United Kingdom...

And to discuss where we can work together in the years ahead.

As Lord Mayor, I myself am an ambassador for the UK's financial and professional services, a crucial part not only of the UK's economy but also its global reputation and influence.

In this, I work very closely with my colleague Catherine McGuinness, the Policy Chair of the City of London – whose five-year term is coming to an end.

Thank you, Catherine, for your support over the years.

Both of us depend on the help of our team here in the City and also of our friends in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and the Department for International Trade.

I would like to thank the Government for their great, and consistent, support – and the Secretary of State in particular for her championing of the trade agenda, both in this role and in your time as International Trade Secretary.

After a period of so many travel restrictions...

It has been great - as Lord Mayor - to be able to get the show back on the road, with visits to neighbouring countries in Europe, to North America, and to the Gulf.

It would not usually be very diplomatic of me to single out one country.

However, I was especially delighted to be able to make a homecoming visit to Ireland – the nation of my birth.

These visits matter because we cannot thrive alone – we have to work with our international partners as part of the global economy.

I look forward to carrying this on, with a visit to South America next week and visits to Asia planned very soon.

This trade and cooperation relies on your diplomacy.

And it relies on the international rule of law.

In recent months, all our diplomacy has taken place against the darkest of backdrops, with Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and immoral invasion of Ukraine.

This is not only an attack on Ukraine.

An attempt to overthrow the independence of another country, seize its territory and redraw the international map by force - that is an attack on the international rule of law.

It is an affront to everything which all of the people in this room are working for.

Such a crime cannot be allowed to succeed.

For if it does – then what, and where, will be next?

I have been encouraged by the unity and resolve shown by the vast majority of countries who have condemned this aggression, and who are working together to stop it - making sure that we do not simply pass by on the other side of the road.

The City of London supports the UK Government in enforcing the most effective possible sanctions.

The City of London Police is the UK's lead force for Economic and Cyber Crime and has been at the forefront of efforts to combat money laundering.

We will also support Ukrainian refugees as they arrive in this country, just as we did with refugees from Afghanistan.

And we will continue to support international cooperation based on the rule of law.

For without the rule of law, and the security and certainty which it underpins, everything else which we achieve is at risk.

And we also need to focus on the other great challenges which require global cooperation – from cyber security to climate change.

Achieving a solution on climate change is vital for every single country represented here tonight.

The City of London recognises the crucial role of finance in enabling those solutions and delivering Net Zero.

Which is why we will be holding the Net Zero Delivery Summit here at Mansion House next month.

As we reach the halfway point between COP26 and COP27, it is vital that we take stock of the progress made so far, and that we set new milestones.

As the name of the summit suggests, the focus is on delivery:

Maintaining the momentum, and making sure we put the pledges made at COP26 into action.

And we can only succeed if the whole world works together.

I also look forward to holding the Impact Summit here in July, building on the City of London's Finance for Impact Initiative - focused on the social as well as the environmental potential of impact investment worldwide.

The City of London, as a global financial centre, will continue working with our international partners on the many agendas which we share – in sustainability, economic security and resilience.

So I look forward to working with many of you here throughout the rest of my time in office.

I hope I will see all of you here often the City.

And I hope that you will see the City of London as a gateway to the rest of the United Kingdom.

In this grave time, the work that you do – and the international cooperation which you embody - is vital.

Thank you.

Finally, I would like to ask you to join me in a toast:

“Ambassadors, High Commissioners, and other representatives of Foreign and Commonwealth governments!”