

## **The Lady Mayor's speech at the Easter Banquet 2026**

Your Excellencies. Secretary of State. Fellow Aldermen. Sheriffs. Chief Commoner. Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good evening, and a *very* warm welcome to Mansion House.

May I begin by recognising the agreement reached between the United States and Iran earlier this week...and echoing the government's hopes for the negotiation of a swift and lasting end to the war, and the full reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

My thanks to the Foreign Secretary for joining us and offering an insight into the UK's position at this pivotal moment.

Thank you, also, to our other speaker, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, His Excellency the Ambassador of Honduras, for being with us tonight.

And it's a real pleasure to see my predecessor, Alastair King, and his wife, Florence, back with us after six months of post-mayoral exclusion!

When I took office in November, I had a clear ambition: to be a global ambassador for the City and for the *entirety* of the UK's financial and professional services sector...

...strengthening our global partnerships and connecting capital with opportunity: both human and financial.

Since then, I've travelled across Europe, to the United States, and to China, with visits to India, Australia, Japan and many of your nations still ahead.

Everywhere I've visited, I've been met with warmth and openness.

Tonight, as we return that hospitality here at Mansion House, I feel that same spirit of friendship.

Because this isn't just a "dinner", it's a timely reminder of what we *have*, and what we stand to *lose* if we were to stop being so open...

...if we were to turn our backs...and slam shut our doors.

We meet at a time when the world feels more uncertain and unstable than ever before...

Conflicts are raging across the world.

The rules that once governed global trade are being tested or cast aside.

And technology is racing ahead, reshaping our economies and societies faster than we can fully grasp.

This is an age defined by volatility - by insecurity, competition, and, at times, fragmentation.

But turning the other way is not an option...

Because, when the world feels fragile, that's precisely when togetherness matters most.

And when I look around this room tonight, what do I see? I see people who - day after day - do the quiet, essential work of ***holding our countries together.***

You find similarities where others see difference. You keep the dialogue going when silence seems inevitable. And you open channels through which trust...that most precious of all resources...flows.

And that's *never* been more important than it is today.

Because the simple truth is, none of us can navigate this moment alone. Not one nation, not one economy, not one ideology.

The future won't be built in isolation. It'll be built through partnerships grounded in shared values, interests and objectives.

Yes, of course, we are different; it would be naïve to deny that. Our cultures differ. Our politics may differ. Our priorities won't always align.

But the defining challenges of our time, don't respect borders - so we cannot let our actions be *limited* by them, either.

For better or worse, we are more connected than *ever before*.

Disruption in one part of the world ripples across continents in a matter of days, hours, minutes, *seconds*. Supply chains falter, markets react, ***real lives are affected***.

And the challenges we face - international security, economic stability and growth, technological change, climate change - are too vast and interwoven to demand anything other than a shared response.

So - as these storms rage on - the question before us is whether we choose to strengthen our connections, or allow them to be swept away...

I believe we must strengthen them...and the UK - and the City - must play its part.

The City is a place where ideas are exchanged...where capital meets purpose... where risks are managed...and futures are built.

Consider the challenge of climate change and energy security.

The green transition requires innovation and investment on an unprecedented scale.

And this is where expert global financial centres like London have a responsibility to step up...

...mobilising capital that supports infrastructure projects and developing finance solutions that can help countries meet their goals.

But, of course, capital alone isn't enough; we also need to see collaboration.

It's only by sharing knowledge and recognising equivalent standards that we can build an approach strong enough to withstand the future.

And, of course, underpinning all of this - every transaction, every agreement, every *relationship* - is trust.

In an uncertain world, trust *really is* the foundation upon which progress becomes possible.

For centuries, the City has been a place where deals are made and honoured, contracts enforced, disputes resolved. In other words, a place where trust thrives...

...with our rich history, transparent regulation, world-leading legal system and open markets giving people the confidence to invest, build, and collaborate.

Despite the headwinds, the UK has retained its position as the second most attractive destination for investment in the world...

...and we continue to serve not only as a *centre* for capital, but a *gateway* for capital flowing into *other* global markets.

And me and the Policy Chair, Chris, are working on measures that will support and create further opportunities for investment and co-investment, while helping innovative firms scale up and develop the tech of tomorrow.

The services the UK provides enable growth and, in times of instability, provide resilience.

Nowhere is this clearer than in London's insurance market, my industry, which has doubled in size in the last decade...

...and its depth of expertise, which plays a critical role in underwriting complex and emerging risks - from supply chain disruption to cyber threats - helps keep the global economy moving.

We'll showcase the full breadth of that unique offer at our Global Risk Summit in May, and I hope to see some of your countries represented.

Finally, a point I've been keen to stress during my mayoralty is that, while the City may be referred to as "the Square Mile", we should be defined not by our boundaries, but by the incredible *reach* of our *relationships*...

For too long, we in the UK have been too modest...too hesitant to speak about our strengths and our role in the world.

But this is not a moment for hesitation...

This is a moment to be clear about who we are, what we offer, and the partnerships we sustain.

Friends,

This is not just about the UK, it's about all of us.

History teaches us that progress is built on cooperation...

That resilience is forged through partnership.

Our success in the years ahead won't be determined by the challenges we face, but how we respond to them.

Whether we turn inward, or reach *outward*.

Whether we allow uncertainty to divide us, or *unite us*.

Whether we act alone, or in *partnership*.

Protectionism...isolationist policies...short-term decisions...these things offer the ***illusion of control***, but, in the long run, they ***weaken us all***.

In the end, our greatest strength is not in our individual abilities. It's in our shared resolve.

So, let's harness the power of the people in this room - and beyond it - to stay open...confront joint challenges...and build that most precious of commodities: trust.

The future will not wait, but, together, we are more than equal to it.  
Thank you.