

Cameron: We can't go on like this

FULL TEXT OF DAVID CAMERON'S 2ND JANUARY 2010 SPEECH

David Cameron, giving his first speech of the New Year in West Oxfordshire, will layout why the country needs a change of leadership in 2010.

David Cameron will say:

(check against delivery)

It's a brand new year.

A new decade is fresh before us.

This time always comes with a sense of hope.

Hope that successes can be built upon; failures can be learned from...

...new ideas started; a new course charted.

But in 2010, we can do more than just hope.

The next general election is no more than 153 days away and I don't think it can come soon enough.

Let's make this the year for change - the year when the positive defeats the negative.

Because we can't go on like this. We need change to get the country back on its feet

And that change must be based on the values of responsibility and aspiration.

We can't go on with the same irresponsible economic policies that gave us the biggest boom, the biggest bust...

...and now threatens our recovery with higher debts, higher instability, higher taxes, higher interest rates and higher unemployment.

We can't go on with an old-fashioned left-wing class war on aspiration from a government that has seen the rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

We can't go on with the old style of politics that divides our country instead of uniting it.

We can't go on with Labour's bureaucracy, running everything from Whitehall, denying people control over their lives and undermining the professionals in our public services.

We can't go on in these difficult times with a weak Prime Minister and a divided government.

We can't go on with another five years of Gordon Brown.

We can't go on like this.

This is no time for more of the same.

We need change to get our country back on its feet.

And it's the modern Conservative party that has the plans, the ideas, the energy, the people, the unity and the leadership to bring that change...

...we are starting our campaign to win the general election today...

...and we'll be spelling out exactly what that will mean every day from now until polling day.

On Monday, we will be publishing the first chapter of our draft manifesto and announcing new plans.

ECONOMIC CHANGE

We need change in our economy, because we can't go on like this.

Britain needs responsible economic policies that deal with our debts, so we have stability to create jobs and keep mortgage rates and taxes lower.

Since I started speaking today, more than half a million pounds has been added to our national debt.

Left alone this is the greatest single risk to sustained economic recovery.

That's why we've been clear about our intention to cut public spending, and clear about where some of those cuts will come – from a one-year freeze on public sector pay to bringing forward the planned increase in the state pension age.

But it's not enough just to deal with the deficit.

To have a hope of competing in the decades to come, our economy needs a complete overhaul.

We need to build an enterprise economy.

We need to create opportunity through green growth and new skills.

We need change right across the board: tax, regulation, banking, infrastructure.

And that's exactly what we're planning - from a cut in the main rate of corporation tax...

...to a new high-speed rail network...

...to the creation of 100,000 apprenticeships.

If we win this year's election Britain will be under new economic management.

We will send out the loudest signal that this country is back open for business and ready for investment.

Decline is not inevitable. Confidence can return.

If we take action now - to get a grip on the public finances and unleash enterprise - Britain can have a bright economic future.

SOCIAL CHANGE

A strong economy gives us the foundation for a better life.

But the mission that drives this party is building a stronger society.

We are progressive Conservatives.

Our goal is to create a fairer, safer, greener country where opportunity is more equal.

It's because we are progressives that we will protect the NHS.

In its bricks and mortars, care and compassion, it is the embodiment of fairness in our society.

We recognise its special place in our society so we will not cut the NHS; we will improve it for everyone.

It's because we are progressives that we will support aspiration so that people from every background, not just the rich, have the chance to get on in life.

A pupil premium that gives the poorest children the chance to go to the best state schools.

Welfare reform that helps those in long-term poverty move into long-term employment.

Strengthening families with practical and financial help to give parents time with their children and keep couples together.

We will fight back against the root causes of deprivation – drug addiction, alcoholism, indebtedness, failing prisons.

It's because we are progressives that we will support responsibility and strong families so we help mend our broken society and tackle the crime and misery it brings.

A decade of big government and blunt, bureaucratic control has undermined responsibility and made our social problems worse, not better.

We are determined to forge a new direction.

We will use the state to help remake society by encouraging people to take responsibility for themselves and for one another.

We will provide new opportunities for community groups, neighbourhood organisations, charities, social enterprises to help rebuild our civil society.

We will create incentives and use the best technology to encourage and enable people to come together, solve their

problems together, make this society stronger together.

As we do this we will redistribute power from the political elite to the man and woman in the street.

Within months of a Conservative victory there would start the most radical decentralisation of power this country has seen for generations.

Government will enter a new era of transparency.

And a strong, unbroken line of democratic accountability will be restored between the people and those that make the decisions that affect their lives.

It is a future barely recognisable from the present, but this party is determined to take us there.

A Conservative Government will send the clearest possible signal to everyone in Britain...

...if you take responsibility, we will back you; if you aspire to a better life for you and your family, we will support you; if you play your part in building the big society, we will reward you.

POLITICAL CHANGE

These are the changes our country needs.

These are the changes that will help get Britain back on its feet.

But I know people have heard this sort of talk before.

Yet nothing ever happens and nothing ever changes.

So why now?

Why should people trust this change?

It's because of the changes we have already made...

...because of the leadership the Conservative Party has shown.

We have shown over the past four years that we can make change happen.

We are showing today the leadership the country needs to get the change it so clearly wants...

...leadership that is modern, strong, decisive, united.

We have opened up our party and have more women candidates and candidates from ethnic minorities ready to bring their expertise to help change this country.

Up and down the country today, Conservative candidates aren't just talking, they're doing, setting up social action projects, helping the communities they hope to serve.

We have argued for fiscal responsibility from day one of my leadership.

We have argued for social responsibility from day one of my leadership.

We have campaigned consistently to put the environment and civil liberties on the political agenda.

We have argued that difficult economic times are not an excuse to drop our commitment to the poorest in the world, but to reaffirm that commitment.

When the expenses scandal broke, we were the first to pay money back, first to publish our expenses online and first to commit to cutting the cost of politics.

And over the past four years, we have always tried to work with other parties rather than looking for political dividing lines where none exist.

We backed Tony Blair's school reforms and renewing Trident even though on both occasions we could have inflicted a damaging defeat on the Government.

And we worked with the Liberal Democrats to get justice for the Gurkhas.

We called for TV debates more than four years ago...and have stuck to that whether ahead in the polls or behind in the polls. It is our consistency on this issue that has made it happen.

In that spirit of unity, of a greater purpose than the simple pursuit of politics, I have an announcement to make.

We have said that from day one of a future Conservative Government, a national security council, with the key ministers and defence chiefs, will sit as a war cabinet.

And I can announce today that if we win this year's election, I will invite leaders of the main opposition parties to attend the war cabinet on a regular basis so they can offer their advice and insights.

When a nation is at war, it needs to pull together.

I am determined that with a Conservative government, it will.

CONCLUSION

Our plans are not timid – but the truth is they can't be.

The problems of today demand more.

They demand real change – and that can't come soon enough.

We can't go on like this. We need change to get the country back on its feet.

A better NHS; an aspirational economy; a big society; a new politics.

We have a four year track record of delivering change in our party.

Now we are impatient to change our country.

We are determined to make a difference.

We are all in this together, and we know that if we all pull together then this country can have great hope for the future.

So let's face this new year with confidence, optimism and hope.

And let's make 2010 the year for change.