

## **DAVID CAMERON'S "BUILT TO LAST" SPEECH**

**Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2006**

“Today I want to set out clearly what we stand for and what we’re fighting for. Our country faces huge challenges and we have to rise to them.

We all know we need a dynamic economy to create the jobs, wealth and opportunity we need. But in a world where we need to compete with China and India, we’re tumbling down the competitiveness rankings and one in five people now work for the state.

We all know we need a stronger society, where individuals and families and communities create strong foundations for people’s lives. But today almost every social indicator is going in the wrong direction – teenage pregnancy, family breakdown, drug and alcohol addiction – and despite billions more being spent on the NHS and schools we still have millions on waiting lists and more than half our kids leave school without a decent education.

We all know we need action to build a more sustainable environment and to tackle climate change. But in a world where we’re seeing more droughts and floods and extreme weather conditions we see a government that has no prospect of meeting its own targets.

So our aims and our challenges are clear: a dynamic economy, a strong society, a sustainable environment. It’s also clear that Labour can’t meet these long-term challenges. They’ve had eight years, and they haven’t done it. But they could have eighty years and they still wouldn’t do it, because they have the wrong values.

They don’t trust people - they tell them what to do, they boss them around, they ban things and pass new laws instead of giving people power and responsibility.

They don't share responsibility – they think that government has all the answers and so they give us a constant stream of quangos and laws and regulations.

Above all, Labour don't think for the long term. They think that announcing government schemes, setting up quangos and passing laws is the way to solve problems. Gimmicks such as night courts, rewarding young people with music vouchers, and marching jobs to cashpoints. None of them got off the ground.

Under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, the state keeps getting bigger and bigger but the long-term challenges are just not being tackled.

We can meet these challenges. Our enduring values are right for our time and right for the challenges we face. So it falls to our Party to meet the challenges of a dynamic economy, a strong society and a sustainable environment.

We know we have the right values. We believe that the more you trust people, the stronger they and society become. We believe in sharing responsibility; that government doesn't have all the answers; that we're all in this together – individuals, families, business, voluntary organisations and social enterprises, business and government. Above all, we think for the long term. We've been around for a while. The long-term is in our blood.

But we know we have to change. I stood for the leadership because I'm fed up with hearing that this Party is out of touch, backward-looking and lacks compassion. That's not the Conservative Party I'm leading.

This Party voted for change. Now we have to show what that change means. Not just what we're changing from but what we're changing to. We have to show that the change is real; that it means something; that it's

built to last. That's why today I'm setting out, in this statement of aims and values, what we stand for and what we're fighting for.

We stand for modern compassionate Conservatism. We're fighting to improve the quality of life for everyone in our country. To build a dynamic economy we will put economic stability first so people know their mortgages are safe. To build a strong society we show that the right test for our policies is how they help the most disadvantaged in society, not the rich. We will improve public services for everyone, not help a few to opt out. And to build a sustainable environment we will put climate change and environmental policy at the heart of our agenda, not just an afterthought. This is the modern Conservative credo. This is the change we're making, and it's built to last.

It's an interesting time in British politics. The battle for the hearts and minds of the British people has begun. We've got one party with two leaders and another with no leader. So we start with an advantage...

But when people say there's no choice in politics any more, that politicians are all the same, I couldn't disagree more.

There's a clear choice between our approach and Gordon Brown's.

A Labour Prime Minister who says that only the state can deliver fairness, and a Conservative Party fighting for people and communities, to unleash the power and positive spirit of our fantastic voluntary organisations and social enterprises.

A Labour Prime Minister in Gordon Brown who wants the state to take an ever-bigger slice of the nation's income in tax and spending, and a Conservative Party fighting for a dynamic economy, understanding that this can only be built by sharing the proceeds of growth between public services and lower taxes.

A Labour Prime Minister in Gordon Brown who thinks that public services can only be run by the state, and a Conservative Party fighting to improve public services for everyone through an understanding that public services paid for by the state don't have to be run by the state.

A Labour Prime Minister in Gordon Brown who's said nothing and done nothing about the environment and a Conservative Party that's put the environment at the top of its agenda.

A Labour Prime Minister in Gordon Brown who will continue with Tony Blair's ineffective authoritarianism and wasteful ID cards, and a Conservative Party that will stand up and fight as the hard-nosed defenders of freedom and security.

A Labour Prime Minister in Gordon Brown who seems to think that Britishness is about telling people to plant flags on their lawn, and a Conservative Party that understands the deepest instincts of our great nation.

So this is a real battle, with a real prize at stake; the chance to tackle those long-term challenges that are so vital for our future. If we don't change, we will let millions of people down. But if we do change, if we stick to it, if we show that it's built to last – then we'll be able to meet the challenges this country faces, and help create a better Britain – built to last.”