COUNCIL OF INSURANCE AGENTS AND BROKERS

It is fantastic to be here and I must confess that when they told me the location of my first major public speaking engagement after leaving office as Prime Minister I was totally bewildered and had to mask my disappointment

because some of you may know that The Broadmoor

in crowthorne Berkshire

is the UK’s number one psychiatric hospital for the criminally insane

but I didn’t let it show

I didn’t ring up the agency and moan

stiff upper lip Johnson I said

I was sure I could think of a good sermon for the criminally insane

so you can imagine my joy at being told that I was speaking to the COUNCIL OF INSURANCE AGENTS AND BROKERS

at the Broadmoor in Colorado springs

and the only reason you can’t escape from this paradise is that it seems to be the size of wales

it took me about an hour to find all the light switches in my room

and I know that you had a huge night last night with Diana ross

ain’t no mountain high enough she said

aint no paracetomol strong enough for the following day

and if you have reached out to touch someone you love this morning and found it’s the wrong person

welcome to this breakfast

and as the governor of the other Broadmoor might say at roll call

it is great to see so many of you here

and I want you to know that every time I come to America I am filled with an electric surge of optimism and confidence

and my message today is that confidence and optimism are justified

even though things look grim

we have just emerged blinking from the worst

pandemic in 300 years

to find our world convulsed by the

biggest European war since 1945

And the reason Putin is launching these barbaric missile attacks

on innocent civilians

is that he is desperate

in seven months the Russians have already suffered

more casualties than they suffered in the whole 10 catastrophe of the invasion of Afghanistan

and if they go on at this rate then before too long Putin will have cost more Russian lives than the whole of the American death toll in the 20 year Vietnam conflict

and with the Kremlin nakedly and irresponsibly talking about the use of nuclear weapons

- for the first time in my lifetime –

-

I want to talk frankly about the risks ahead

and I believe that in one important sense I am among friends and colleagues

because we are all professional calculators of risk

and for the last 15 years doing all sorts of jobs in UK politics I have had to calculate all sorts of risk

when I was mayor of London they came to me and they said

it might rain on the VIPs during the opening ceremony of the Olympics

because we saved money by not building a roof for the stadium

I said give me a break – as a cyclist I happen to know it is not raining in London 94 per cent of the time

but some of my colleagues in central government panicked and

they spent millions on about 70,000 pointless plastic ponchos

I was right

I mean there was a light drizzle but no one had to use a poncho

and there is now a poncho mountain somewhere in London

and then people said I was mad to promote cycling

and flood the streets of London with hundreds of thousands of novice cyclists wobbling around on their mobile phones

and I said no – we are going to do it

because I knew the massive cardiac benefits and euphoria of gliding beneath the plane trees in the greatest city on earth

and the reality was that we had so much cycling

with vast pelotons of people in suits

that the risks went down, and cycling got safer

not just relatively but absolutely

and in 8 years of cycling the streets every day for eight years and I only once had an accident

I hit a tourist who was looking the wrong way

he was French

we had both had a good lunch and rapidly recovered

and then they came to me and they said I was reckless and dangerous to call for the UK to leave the European Union

they said the economy would crash

and millions would be thrown out of work

well as I speak to you the UK has the lowest unemployment since 1974

and we are lengthening our lead as the number one destination for global investment especially in tech

fin tech med tech green tech bio tech ed tech nano tech

it sounds like 15th century mexico

and with more unicorns than France and Germany and Israel put together

we are getting rid of onerous regulations solvency 2, mifid

we have done 76 free trade deals

and even if we haven’t yet done a free trade deal with the US we are selling you British beef for the first time in decades

how have the people of Colorado been able to get by without the roast beef of old England?

what have they been worried about?

what is the risk of contracting mad cow disease from eating British beef

it is about the same as being decapitated by a Frisbee

or much, much lower than being blinded by a champagne cork

I was right about all those risks

and as soon as we got a vaccine for covid

the gloomadon poppers came to me and said what if it’s dangerous

and I said get me the numbers

what is the risk of dying of a thrombosis from a covid vaccine

it’s far lower than the risk from covid itself

and so the UK was the first country to put an approved covid vaccine into someone’s arm

and that is why we had the fastest vaccine rollout in Europe and that’s why we were the fastest major economy to come out of lockdown

and I know that this may sound a bit like bragging

but my experience is that if you don’t say these things no one is going to say them for you

and I want to use this involuntary hiatus in my career

to talk about how we can reduce the risks

how we can protect ourselves and our economies and our future

and here in this great state of Colorado

I want to talk about the particular role of the US A

I speak as a native of this country

I was born in New York

which later turned out to be a very expensive decision under your doctrine of global taxation but I wanted to be close to my mother at the time

and it has meant that I am a life-long believer in the transatlantic alliance and the values incarnated by

our two countries

I mean democracy and freedom

and in spite of all the difficulties and challenges I believe that freedom is going to win

let me give you a couple of reasons for optimism

hands up anyone here who was vaccinated against covid

hands up anyone who had sinopharm or sinovac

hands up if you had sputnik

that delicious mixture of monkey glands and anti-freeze

do you remember all that stuff in the liberal media about how china had put us all to shame in their brilliant handling of covid

locking people up in filing cabinets and barricading them in broom cupboards

do you remember being told that democracies were failing in the battle with disease

that our very love of freedom was itself the problem?

I say phooey

what was notable about the vaccines that actually worked

I mean the ones that stopped you getting covid

was that

they were made by western pharmaceutical companies

they were not made by the repressive former communist autocracies

I am a longstanding admirer of China’s culture and civilisation

but I rang my father not long ago to find he was still locked up in his hotel in Chengdu

he had watched godfather one godfather two godfather three

even better in Chinese, he told me

he had watched meet the fockers

and just as he thought he was about to get out of quarantine the whole city was put into lockdown

while we haven’t had any restrictions at all in the UK since July last year

and again I hope I am not bragging

I am just saying

that when people call time on the dominance of western liberal democracies

and when they say that our model is no longer adequate for the times

they are premature and they are wrong

and they are wrong when they say we no longer have the will to protect ourselves and our values

because on the greatest threat to global peace and prosperity

the greatest risk to world order that we face

our two countries – the US and the UK – are once again standing side by side

and standing for democracy and freedom

I remember towards the end of last year having a feeling of surging optimism

that western technology had seen off covid

we had a great COP 26 summit in Glasgow and though it was incredibly difficult and precarious, we could see a path to beating climate change

we were going to power past coal

we were leading the world in zero carbon vehicles

we were planting gazillions of trees

and you could see as with the covid vaccines how the technological solutions to climate change

were powered by free markets and the free exchange of ideas

and were going to create millions of high-wage high-skill jobs

and then something happened in feb this year

a risk we had all dismissed

a black swan

we could not believe that Putin would be so insane to invade a country of 45 m people

a country that had an army 200,000 strong

we couldn’t believe he would take on the Ukrainians

and never forget that it was 10m soviet Ukrainian troops that helped to rout the Nazis in World war 2

and we were wrong

because it was he Putin who miscalculated the risk

and I am proud that we gave them anti-tank missiles that were of material importance in those early days in Feb and March

but I know that there was one country that really turned the dial

and made the difference when it counted

and that is the USA – and I don’t think americans have got enough credit

and here in Colorado Springs

in my first chance since leaving office to speak to an influential American audience

I just want to say thank you

you are helping to keep a country free

you are helping to protect an entirely innocent people

giving them what they need to defend their families and their homes against a vicious and entirely unprovoked attack

and my message to you is

stay strong

stay the course

don’t be spooked by the sabre rattling and Putin’s nuclear blather

he’s like the fat boy in dickens

he wants to make our flesh creep

and if you ask me the risk he will do it

I would say that risk is verging on zero

because if he does that – if he uses nuclear weapons against a country that poses no threat to him or his people

if he becomes the first man to use nuclear weapons since 1945

simply because he cannot accept the reality that he was wrong about Ukraine

because he cannot accept the insult to his ego

then he tenders the immediate resignation of Russia from the club of civilised nations

he will turn his country into a moral leper colony

and plunge his economy into a cryogenic paralysis from which it would take decades to recover

and that is after the immediate strategic counter-measures that the west would be obliged to take and which it would not be sensible to discuss

if he does that – he forfeits any kind of sympathy among the swing voters and the countries that have so far given him far too much benefit of the doubt

in south Asia, in Latin America, in sub-saharan Africa

if he does that then he loses the patience of the Chinese

and if he does that – then the simmering magma of domestic Russian anxiety about what is happening will overflow

and that fundamentally is why I dismiss this talk

and I urge us all

not to go down this psychological rabbit hole

don’t let Putin frame this as a stand-off between a nuclear Nato and nuclear Russia

This is about an entirely legitimate campaign to help the Ukrainians protect their country with the equipment they need

just as you would help your neighbour with a hose or extinguishers if their home was on fire

The Ukrainians are going to win because Putin fatally misunderstood them

how much they love their country

how willingly and how heroically they will fight

and it is not our job to provide Putin with an off-ramp or a face saver

he has plenty of ways of explaining what has happened to the Russian population

and to judge by the opinion polls they will swallow just about anything

and it is not our job to worry about what happens in the Kremlin

our job is to help the Ukrainians to win

so let us double down our support

let us give them the tanks and the fighter planes they need

let us give them more of the HIMARS, the long range multiple launch rocket systems

let us help them take back every part of their country that Putin has invaded since Feb 24

and I know that in these tough times there are plenty of politicians in Europe and in the US who will say that Ukraine is not worth it

because of the economic downside

and so let me tell you why it’s worth it

It’s worth it because with every week that goes by Putin gets weaker and we get stronger

and with every windfarm we greenlight offshore

with every new nuclear power plant we commission,

Europe is getting less vulnerable to his energy blackmail

and it is worth backing the Ukrainians because

if and when they win – and they will -

it will send a message around the world that freedom matters

and I am thinking about east Asia and the straits of Taiwan

it will tell the planet that we do see a difference between a democracy and a tyranny

it will show that after decades of retreat and passivity that we are willing to stand up for our values

and if and when the Ukrainians win it will show something of supreme value to us all

that aggression does not pay

that borders must be respected

that you can’t just crush international law and the rights of free peoples

and never forget that when America finally decided in 1942 to do the right thing

having exhausted all the other available options

to come in on the side of freedom

and to resist the tyrannical changing of borders in Europe by force

that great and humane intervention

paved the way for decades of peace prosperity and stability under a new rules based international order

and that is why this is the right thing to do for long term stability of the world economy

and that is why this is a pivotal moment in our history

that’s how we can use this chance to reduce the risks to our children and generations to come

that’s why I thank you for what your great country has done in the last eight months and is continuing to do

and I thank you for listening today

Ukraine – support… will it last

has to last

many heroes

Ukrainian people

volodomyr zelensky

US

It’s the US that has made the difference

the real economic disaster would be to let Putin do it to other countries

energy crisis impact

- cop

-

vaccine roll-out

MHRA - NHS

one day I will tell the true story of how they tried to snaffle 5m vaccines

the ones they said were quasi ineffective

public sector private sector

achievements

crime

- levelling up

brexit – why did you get it done

irrefutable power of logic

being able to do your own thing is crucial

MHRA

Ukraine

financial regulation

aukus

G7 – carbis bay -- next G7

aukus

writing – will you return

queen

- what she does… what she represents

- above politics

- values

- saw her two days before she died

-

Denver broncos

London is the world capital of tourism

who was the mayor of London who got the nfl there?

nfl