**cop sharm el sheikh 2022**

**New York Times event**

It is great to be here in Egypt the cradle of civilisation and I want to congratulate the Egyptian government on their summit and to thank my old friend sameh shoukry for his invitation

and thank the NYT for giving me this platform

It is incredible to think how much has changed in just one year since the last COP

and let me be frank – how much damage has been done – in just one year –

to our great common human purpose of tackling manmade climate change

It was only a year ago that we all came together in Glasgow and defied some of the gloomier media expectations

we showed what we could do when humanity really worked for an agreement

and thanks to the wisdom of the delegations and to the UN negotiators – and I want to pay a particular tribute to my old colleague and friend alok sharma

we got some unexpectedly sizeable nationally determined contributions

we agreed enough at Glasgow to take 4.5 bn gigatons of CO2 out of the atmosphere

and since then other NDCs have come in – notably from India – that take us to 6 bn all in

that is 6bn less carbon swaddling the planet in the choking eiderdown of heat

that is a bigger reduction than we agreed at Paris itself

and in that spirit of creative optimism we went further and dozens of countries agreed to jettison the use of coal fired power stations

and dozens of countries agreed to abandon vehicles powered by ICEs fuelled by hydrocarbons

and we came together to protect the forests that are so crucial for the very oxygenation of the planet

145 countries agreed to stop or reverse deforestation by 2030

and though we did not find enough cash for everything we need to do, we in the developed world at least began to recognise the help that will be necessary

to protect the climate vulnerable countries around the world

the small island nations

and to help the developing world to adapt to a low carbon future

and if you want one statistic to remind you of the fundamental unfairness of imposing swingeing costs on countries that did not cause this crisis

because they did not pump the carbon out there 200 years ago, as we did in the UK

let me remind you that the whole of Africa – including this country we are in – is STILL only responsible for 4 per cent of global emissions

and that is why this must be a joint endeavour and it was so encouraging last year to think that the developed world was seeing not just the moral obligations of investing in worldwide green solutions

but the huge commercial opportunity as well

and I remember at COP in Glasgow really believing for the first time in my life that anthropogenic climate change might genuinely be capable of solution

and the clouds of despair momentarily parted to reveal a tiny gleam of hope

and I could see a way in which we could really say that we might be able to restrain the growth in global temperatures to 1.5 degrees by the end of the century

and then barely 3 months later we had the moral and human catastrophe of Putin’s invasion of Ukraine

there are and will be many victims of that grotesque miscalculation – but our planet is suffering

and the fight against climate change has been one the most important collateral victims

because the spike in oil and gas prices – and the consequent global inflation, the hikes in the cost of fertiliser and food

have had an impact here and everywhere

they have led to a corrosive cynicism about net zero

They have led people to say that we all went too far and too fast

that we have been naïve and utopian in our rush to move beyond hydrocarbons and that we have inflicted needless energy costs on our populations

and people have drawn the conclusion that the whole project needs to be delayed mothballed put on ice

and that we need to reopen coal fired power stations and frack the hell out of the British countryside

and so I believe that Sharm must be a moment when we tackle this nonsense head on

yes we will need to use hydrocarbons during a transitional period, and yes, in the UK there is more we can do with our own domestic resources

but this is not the moment to abandon the campaign for net zero

this is not the moment to turn our backs on renewable technology

one of my critics in the Daily Telegraph – a former adviser of mine as it happens – scoffed at wind power on the grounds that it is mediaeval

mediaeval?

I would point out to him that burning oil is positively Palaeolithic

and I believe that critics of this agenda massively underestimate the ability of the human race to harness the natural world to come up with innovative zero carbon solutions

In the last year alone China has created 55 Gigawatts of renewable energy

55 gigawatts of renewable energy – that’s more than half the total daily needs of the UK

America is actually going to decarbonise its grid by 2030

that is the two greatest polluters on the planet showing the can-do promethean spirit that will get us out of this mess

and here in Egypt they are soon going to be making the first zero emission vehicles manufactured in Africa

This is the moment to put the electric throttle flat to the floor and build on all the programmes that we got going in Glasgow

the plans to help South Africa, for instance, to go for a low carbon grid, with all the investment opportunities that will involve.

This is the moment to help Indonesia and all the giants of the future to leap-frog hydrocarbons, go green, and create an inexhaustible stream of high-wage high-skill jobs

jobs that will have this extra and unbeatable satisfaction of knowing that you are not only helping to feed your family but helping to save the planet at the same time

that is the message we need to revive

that is the great campaign we need to relaunch

and in the UK we are not only helping people with the cost of energy

we are of course making sure that we can never again be so vulnerable to sudden gyrations in the price of gas

we are putting in 50 GW of wind by 2030

and we are building a nuclear reactor every year rather than every ten years

and surely that is the best retort to those who want to chuck net zero

if we had made these renewable investments earlier, and if we had not lost our place as the number one civilian nuclear power in the world – never forget the UK was the first to split the atom and to have a civilian nuclear reactor

then the consequences of the gas price spike would not have been so severe

and that is why I argue to my friends and colleagues that we need to accelerate these programmes now in the UK, because that is the way to build the resilience and energy security for the medium and long term

it is fantastic to be here in Sharm which has changed out of all recognition since I first came in 1987 and stayed in a tent on the cliff top

and it was surely here or hereabouts that Moses miraculously parted the waters of the red sea and led his people to the promised land

well this time there will be no miracle escape from the inundations and the other potentially disastrous consequences of climate change that is all too real and visible

temperatures in London this July reached 40 degrees

unprecedented and unbearable by normal UK standards

and perhaps even contributing – who knows – to unexpected political turmoil

and yet that is absolutely nothing to the fires, the droughts, the catastrophes we are seeing around the world and which make the pharaonic plagues look trivial

we can see the scale of the problem – but we also have the rudiments of the solution

The only way forward is by patient negotiation and compromise and work and investment in the right technology, both at home and abroad

we must end the defeatism that has crept in since last year

we must end Putin’s energy blackmail

we must keep up our campaign to end global dependence on hydrocarbons

and if we retain the spirit of creative and promethean optimism that we saw at Paris and Glasgow, then we can keep 1.5 alive

thanks to you all for listening and have a great cop