Twitter Thread by Lewis Goodall

Lewis Goodall
@lewis_goodall

Keir Starmer giving his most important speech yet-laying out his vision for the future.

“The Conservatives say they want to build back. But I don’t want to go back. You can’t return to business as usual. And certainly not back to an economy rooted in insecurity and inequality.”



"The foundations of our society have been weakened over a decade...even before the pandemic life expectancy had stalled for the first time in a century. Child poverty had shot up to over 4 million. A child growing up in a deprived areas of the North East can expect to live for.."

"...five fewer years than a deprived child brought up in a deprived area of London. What sort of legacy is that for a party which has been in govt for a decade? That life itself got cheaper. And shorter."

"During the last year my thoughts have returned time and time again to the wartime generation. Those who suffered the horrors of WW2, who rebuilt Britain from the rubble of the Blitz, created the NHS and built millions of homes fit for heroes. And I contrast that...

"...to those exposed to Covid in underfunded care homes, unable to say goodbye to families and to loved ones. How can the PM look those families in the eye and say 'we did everything we could'? When the truth is the Tories failed to fix social care for a decade?"

"We've seen the same tragic stories in overstretched hospitals, in GPs' surgeries, in schools with ever growing class sizes, in our once proud town centres and high streets. In an economy so insecure that millions of people can't afford to isolate and where...

"...the lowest paid have been amongst the most exposed. These are the inevitable consequences of a decade of decisions guided by the notion that govt can't interfere with the market; that you can strip back public services; ignore inequalities; and take money out of the..."

"...pockets of those who need it most, only to look the other way when the consequences become clear. This pandemic has pulled back the curtain on that way of doing things. This must now be the moment to think about the sort of country we want to be. A call to arms."

"That's the path I would take in the March budget. To begin a new chapter in the history of our country...I fear the Conservatives are incapable of seizing this moment. That what we'll get on March 3rd will be short term and it won't even be a fix."

"Successive Conservative PMs have used the rhetoric of change- 'northern powerhouse', 'burning injustices', 'levelling up'- but all it ever adds up to is a few soundbites and photo opportunities."

Starmer: "But the truth is, whoever their PM is, the Tories simply don't believe that it's the role of government to deal with inequality and insecurities...you can get away with that for a short time, or even a few years. But after a decade the results are obvious."

They try to pretend they're a different Conservative party. Well you could have fooled me. If you can't decide whether to plunge 100,000s of kids into poverty by cutting UC, you have no chance of mending our broken system."

This is the key theme which Starmer's team want to get across. To try to encourage the public not to see the pandemic purely in its own terms but in the context of a decade of government policy, policies which they say left us deeply ill-equipped to deal with its effects.

Starmer: "This is no time for a second wave of austerity. This is no time for tax rises."

As I reported yday on NN, Starmer's team believe that despite massive govt intervention, the Conservatives have not fundamentally changed their view of political economy. That Sunak...

...particular will be arguing for retrenchment. That's an opening they think they can prise open in the medium term.

Starmer says spending public wisely is important but: "Covid has shifted the axis on economic policy- both what is necessary and what is possible has changed."

"The age in which the govt has done little but collect and distribute revenue is over... I believe people are now looking for more from their govt. Like they were after WW2...a govt that knows the value of public service, not just the price of the market."

"The Conservatives simply don't believe that it's the duty of govt to deliver social justice and equality. That's why in the end they'll always fall back on the short term demands of the market. But if we're honest for too long Lab has failed that the only way to deliver..."

"...social justice is by working with the enterprising power of British businesses...I know govts can't do that on their own. And a new partnership with British biz is the only way to secure...a prosperous country. The vast majority of businesses know this too."

"People often ask me why I want this job? The answer is simple: to change people's lives. Because when I see an injstice- I want to put it right. It's not just about policy choices. It's an utter determination that pulses through my veins."

"Inequality is not only morally bankrupt. It's economic stupidity too. A fair society will lead to a more prosperous economy...Harold Wilson once said that the Labour Party is a moral crusade or it's nothing. He was right."

"Our moral crusade now is to address the inequalities and injustices that this crisis has so brutally exposed and to build a better more secure future."

Powerful ending. But good encapsulation of the awkwardness of making speeches in an empty room.