

Twitter Thread by Mafevema #CommonGround



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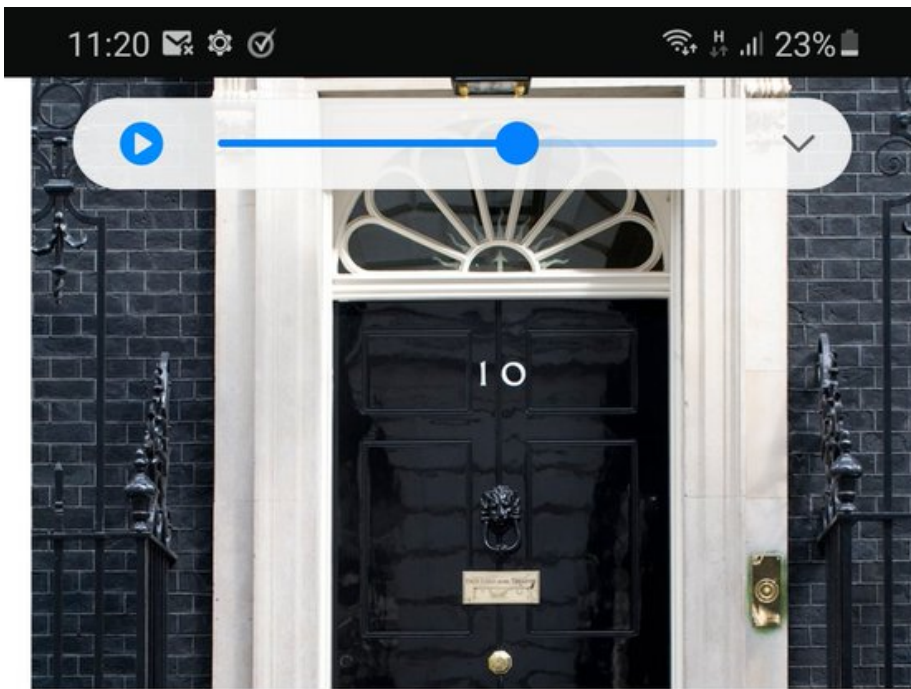


Why is Johnson's speech at the Munich conference hailed in some quarters, even by some journalists that should know better, as "a major policy speech" with "substance"? I went to read it expecting for once to be pleasantly surprised. Alas!

Thread

It is full of the usual misplaced optimism not backed by any serious analysis, jingoism & digs at other EU leaders with transparent, nearly servile efforts to regain favour with the new US administration. A few examples:

The speech starts with the trademark rethorical device beloved of the UK right (whether to attack "woke" culture or pro-EU sentiments): A wildly exaggerated overblown simplistic statement that you then go on to "disprove"



There is a habit of turning up at occasions such as these and announcing portentously that the West is locked in terminal decline, the Atlantic alliance is fractured, and NATO is in peril, and everything we hold dear risks being cast into oblivion.

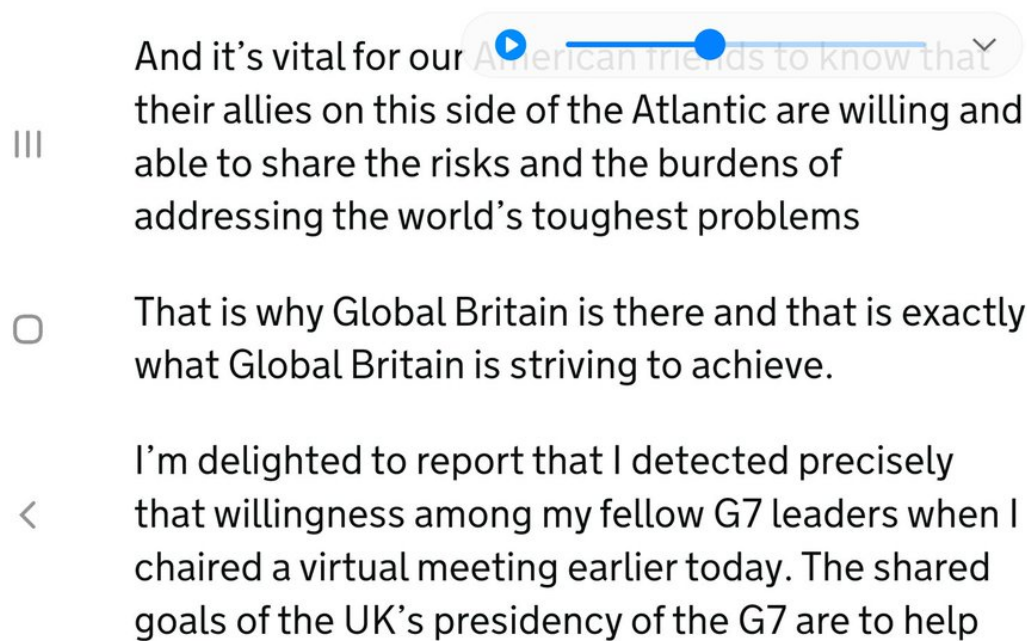
And that industry of pessimism has thrived recently, perhaps even in Munich.

So without wishing for a moment to downplay the challenges and dangers we face, in the teeth of a global pandemic, let me respectfully suggest that the gloom has been overdone and we are turning a corner, and the countries we call the “West” are drawing together and combining their formidable strengths and expertise once again, immensely to everybody benefit.

As you’ve seen and heard earlier, America is

So a dig aimed at Macron for saying NATO needs to adapt to changing circumstances and flattery towards America : "As you've seen and heard earlier, America is unreservedly back as leader of the free world and that is a fantastic thing."

Then the self- aggrandisements : notice all the "I" & "Global Britain"

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- A screenshot of a speech transcript with a video player overlay at the top. The video player shows a blue play button and a progress bar. The transcript text is as follows:
- III And it's vital for our American friends to know that their allies on this side of the Atlantic are willing and able to share the risks and the burdens of addressing the world's toughest problems
 - O That is why Global Britain is there and that is exactly what Global Britain is striving to achieve.
 - < I'm delighted to report that I detected precisely that willingness among my fellow G7 leaders when I chaired a virtual meeting earlier today. The shared goals of the UK's presidency of the G7 are to help

Then (irony klaxon), the PM who by mysterious means ensured exclusivity of supply for vaccines manufactured on its territory to the clear detriment of its nearest "friends" (having received vaccines from EU factories when its supply was short) exalts the "flames of cooperation "

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- A screenshot of a web browser showing a speech transcript. The browser's address bar displays 'www.gov.uk'. The transcript text is as follows:
- III resources, we should seek to develop vaccines against emerging diseases in 100 days.
 - O Even in the early weeks of the pandemic, I hope that we in the UK resisted the temptations of a *sauf qui peut* approach and tried to keep the flame of global cooperation alive.
 - <

■says the man who pulled his country out of Europe security institutions to the horror of his immediate predecessor making it more exposed to terrorist threat, the same man who casually disregarded (even recently poured oil over) the simmering tensions in Northern Ireland.

to show how we *will get there, so I hope* that other countries will follow the UK's example.

But we can only address global problems alongside our friends, and extend Britain's influence around the world, if the UK itself and our own citizens are safe, including from the terrorist threat we all face.

The starting point of our Integrated Review of foreign, defence and development policy – which

Then ■ pathetic boast: I have got a big one too (hey, Joe, remember all those big defense procurement contracts)

and preserve the peace.

This year, the Royal Navy's new aircraft carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, will embark on her maiden deployment, sailing 20,000 nautical miles to the Indo-Pacific and back.

On her flight deck will be a squadron of F35 jets from the US Marine Corps; among her escorts will be an American destroyer, showing how the British and American armed forces can operate hand-in-glove - or plane-on-flightdeck - anywhere in the world.

But investing in new capabilities is not an end in

Followed by another Brexit boast & a dig at the (naturally slower more cumbersome) EU. But ask yourself: which sanctions matter more to Putin? EU's or UK's? And which UK party wanted to pull out of the Human Right Convention & threatens to "rewrite" the Human Rights Act?

III In leaving the European Union we restored sovereign control over vital levers of foreign policy.

○ For the first time in nearly 50 years, we now have the power to impose independent national sanctions, allowing the UK to act swiftly and robustly. Our first decision was to create a Magnitsky regime designed to punish human rights offenders. The UK then became the first European country to sanction senior figures in Belarus after

Then new dig at the EU & pat on Biden's back: this time about the EU/China investment Agreement which 1) merely ensures the same competitive advantages to EU cnies as to US ones 2) includes - contrary to US's arrangements- some leverage due to China's commitments slave labour

III We have consistently spoken out against China's repression of the Uighur people in Xinjiang province and we will continue to do so. We have introduced new measures to ensure that the supply chains of UK companies are not tainted by the violations in Xinjiang. After China broke a treaty and imposed a repressive national security law on Hong Kong, the

Britain always had "sovereignty" over its defense policy. The "Transatlantic Quad" was operational & has been much weakened by Brexit. As for the "new resolve" of our European "friends", it has nothing to do with what Britain does or does not do.

III Now that we have left the EU, Parliament has a greater say over foreign policy and this has only reinforced our national determination to be a Force for Good in the world.

○ Britain is working alongside France, Germany and the United States in a trans-Atlantic quad to address the most pressing security issues, including Iran.

< And I sense a new resolve among our European friends and allies to come together and act again with unity and determination, and we witnessed that spirit after the attempted murder of Alexei

Fawning to the point of being obsequious & yet another dig at the EU. Completely ignore the question mark on the health of US democracy raised by recent events.

security is unconditional and immovable.

III I believe that Europe increasingly recognises the necessity of joining our American friends to
○ rediscover that far-sighted leadership and the spirit of adventure and trans-Atlantic unity, that made our two continents great in the first place.
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A new world is rising up around us, patterns of trade

And finally a clichés ridden conclusion, high on hopes, light on facts

III Let's build a coalition for openness and innovation, reaching beyond established alliances and the confines of geography, proud of our history, but free of any temptation to turn back the clock, and harnessing the genius of open societies to flourish in an era of renewed competition.

O Let's respectfully dispel the air of pessimism that has sometimes attended our conferences.

< America and Europe, side by side, have the ability to prove once again the innate advantages of free nations, and to succeed in forging our own destiny.

Flattery to the US, sly attacks on the EU (particularly France, our major European defense partner which is at striking odds with the supposed aim of the speech), trademark boosterism, overblown statements on Britain's role, overuse of the word "Britain"

(is NI to be dumped?) , if this is a "great speech" of "substance", what is a poor Johnson's speech? The major achievement is that the sentences hang together & it was blissfully short.