

Boris Johnson's resignation statement -7th July 2022

Good afternoon, everybody. Good afternoon. Thank you. Thank you. It is clearly now the will of the Parliamentary Conservative Party, that there should be a new leader of that party and therefore a new prime minister, and I've agreed with Sir Graham Brady, the chairman of our backbench MPs, that the process of choosing that new leader should begin now, and the timetable will be announced next week. And I have today appointed a cabinet to serve - as I will - until a new leader is in place.

So I want to say to the millions of people who voted for us in 2019, many of them voting Conservative for the first time, thank you for that incredible mandate, the biggest Conservative majority since 1987, the biggest share of a vote since 1979.

And the reason I have fought so hard in the last few days to continue to deliver that mandate in person was not just because I wanted to do so, but because I felt it was my job, my duty, my obligation to you to continue to do what we promised in 2019.

And of course, I'm immensely proud of the achievements of this government: from getting Brexit done to settling our relations with the Continent for over half a century, reclaiming the power for this country to make its own laws in Parliament, getting us all through the pandemic, delivering the fastest vaccine rollout in Europe, the fastest exit from lockdown, and in the last few months, leading the West in standing up to Putin's aggression in Ukraine.

And let me say now, to the people of Ukraine, that I know that we in the UK will continue to back your fight for freedom for as long as it takes.

And at the same time in this country, we've been pushing forward a vast program of investment in infrastructure, in skills and technology - the biggest in a century - because if I had one insight into human beings, it is that genius and talent and enthusiasm and imagination are evenly distributed throughout the population - but opportunity is not. And that's why we must keep levelling up, keep unleashing the potential in every part of the United Kingdom. And if we can do that in this country, we will be the most prosperous in Europe.

And in the last few days, I've tried to persuade my colleagues that it would be eccentric to change governments when we're delivering so much, when we have such a vast mandate and when we're actually only a handful of points behind in the polls - even in midterm after quite a few months and pretty relentless sledging - and when the economic scene is so difficult domestically and internationally.

I regret not to have been successful in those arguments, and of course, it's painful not to be able to see through so many ideas and projects myself. But as we've seen in Westminster, the herd instinct is powerful; when the herd moves, it moves.

And, my friends in politics, no one is remotely indispensable, and our brilliant and Darwinian system will produce another leader, equally committed to taking this country forward through tough times. Not just helping families to get through it, but changing and improving the way we do things - cutting burdens on businesses and families and yes, cutting taxes, because that is the way to generate the growth and the income we need to pay for great public services.

And to that new leader, I say, wherever he or she may be, I say I will give you as much support as I can. And to you, the British public, I know that there will be many people who are relieved and, perhaps, quite a few who will also be disappointed. And I want you to know how sad I am to be giving up the best job in the world. But that's the breaks.

I want to thank Carrie and our children, all the members of my family who have had to put up with so much for so long. I want to thank the peerless British civil service for all the help and support that you have given, our police, our emergency services, and, of course, our fantastic NHS who at a critical moment helped to extend my own period in office, as well as our armed services and our agencies that are so admired around the world, and our indefatigable Conservative Party members and supporters whose selfless campaigning makes our democracy possible.

I want to thank the wonderful staff here at Chequers - here at Number 10 and of course at Chequers - and our fantastic prop force detectives, the one group, by the way, who never leak.

Above all, I want to thank you, the British public, for the immense privilege that you have given me. And I want you to know that from now on, until the new prime minister is in place, your interests will be served and the government of the country will be carried on.

Being Prime Minister is an education in itself. I've travelled to every part of the United Kingdom and in addition to the beauty of our natural world, I find so many people possessed of such boundless British originality and so willing to tackle old problems in new ways, that I know that even if things can sometimes seem dark now, our future together is golden.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.